Greatly Inspiring Brahmacharya (Celibacy) Quotes

Brahmacharya (celibacy) is vital to a good amount of concentration, memory and intelligence which are essential for success in any part of life, especially student life. I hope, you enjoy reading this document, learn many things. Try reading these quotes daily & lead a peaceful life of elevated consciousness & bliss. And share these insights and aids with others also in a noble spirit of selfless service.

Anyone is most welcome to distribute or copy contents of this document for non-commercial purpose.

Thanks,

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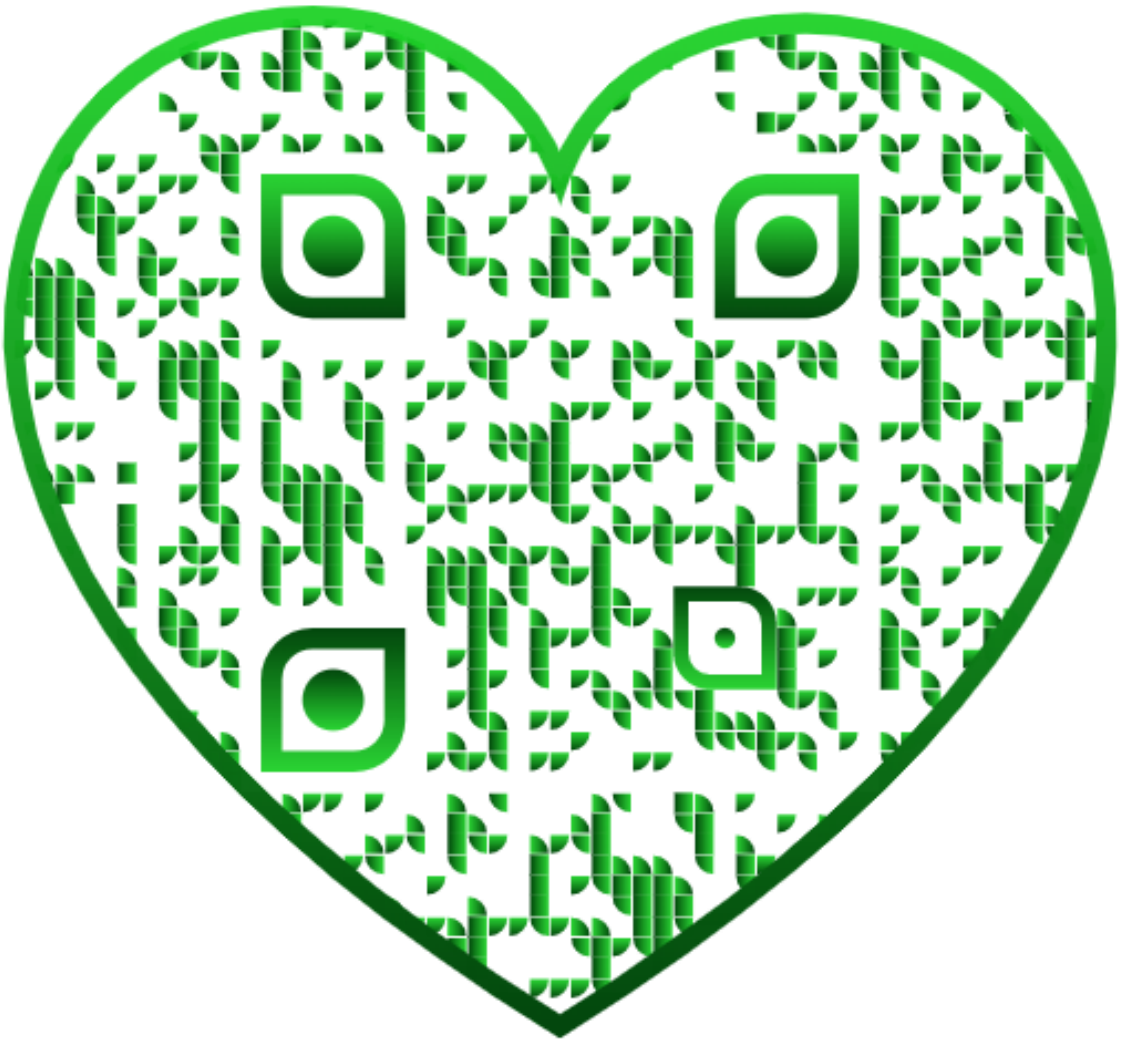

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I. Introduction

Hi friends,

This post is a collection of greatly inspiring brahmacharya(celibacy) quotes which I use for **reading of brahmacharya(celibacy) quotes for 10 min everyday just after finishing my early morning yoga-practice** (I spend total 20 min for spiritual reading in the morning - 10 min for brahmacharya quotes and 10 min for quotes on meditation and Self-Realization from scriptures like Gita, Upanishads, Yoga Sutra and teachings and life-stories of great sages and I do recommend the same for every serious spiritual aspirant. Why? Because, our mind needs the spiritual food of soul-elevating thoughts daily as much as our body needs daily the material food for its nutrition needs. Err! What are you saying, "I cannot spend 20 min daily for spiritual reading due to lack of time?" Well! You can daily spend 30 min on reading newspaper most of which give useless stuffs which you need not read in full details. So, here is a proposal: instead of spending 30 min on newspaper, spend only 15 min there and use that saved 15 min + 5 min more from your side (total 20 min) for spiritual reading everyday in the morning. At least try this approach: whatever I suggest/write is coming from a battle-hardened veteran – as well as on this truth!) Please Click here to go to quotes section directly, but in case you want to learn more about my quest for Samadhi (and hence, "akhand brahmacharya"/"unbroken celibacy") and my approach for being in akhand brahmacharya whole life, continue reading below. And in case you have some doubts on the benefits of brahmacharya, then please do read this post as well.

Since **akhand brahmacharya** (unbroken celibacy) for minimum 12 years at-a-stretch is a sine-qua-non (an absolute must) for awakening Kundalini and realizing Self-bliss, every spiritual aspirant needs to use all tricks of mind to achieve this state. Brahmacharya was quite challenging even in old times when there were no glossy newspaper, magazines, television, movies and internet, so what to say of present times. The problem becomes particularly tricky in light of huge bombardment of mind in today's world with all kinds of lust-exciting images – combine that with mind's automatic fascination with any intense sense-pleasure and you get a perfect recipe for Action-thriller movie like Spiderman/Rambo playing inside the mind of every spiritual aspirant, where the hero faces overwhelmingly tricky situations and obstacles, which he/she must surmount at all costs to realize the eventual goal of Self-bliss.

ref: http://gopal4mission.wordpress.com/2007/12/21/sarvodaya-sannyasa

Also, in order to be a Sarvodaya Sannyasin, a sarvodaya sadhaka will need to practice unbroken celibacy for at least 12 years continuously, apart from doing >= 1 year fulltime secluded yoga-practice 2 times (with some years of gap between two secluded fulltime yoga-practice) combined with vow of silence and not spending time in reading spiritual books or any other things during seclusion-period and utilizing entire seclusion period for only yoga-practice.

Why at least 12 years of unbroken brahmacharya/celibacy?

Because, nature requires a fixed quantum of energy for any major change. For example, water has a tendency to flow downward. If it gets heated, it does not boil unless and until heat energy increases water's temperature to 100 degree centigrade. And once that happens, water starts boiling and getting converted into vapor. Now, see the contrast between water and vapor: water flows downward, whereas vapor flows upward; water is liquid and visible to eyes, whereas vapor is gaseous and becomes invisible after merging into atmosphere. Exactly the same happen with pranic energy – when it manifests at the level of lust, the tendency of this energy is to move outward and downward, degrading our consciousness level to animal level – this state is comparable to the water state. But, when after gathering pranic energy for (at least) 12 years without any break in celibacy is achieved, the pranic energy manifests at higher levels of creativity and spiritual bliss, moving more inward and upward – compare this state to the vapor state. And compare the 12 years' practice of unbroken celibacy to gathering enough heat to make water temperature 100 degree centrigade in order to convert it into the vapor state.

Now, the only issue is – in spiritual life, bliss comparable to (in fact, superior to, as per our yogis) lustful pleasure arises after 12 years' unbroken, continuous celibacy, when kundalini reaches the 5th or higher centers of Vishuddhi/Agya Chakras – of course, once this happens, mind loses all interest in lustful pleasure as one would naturally prefer to enjoy more intense and permanent spiritual bliss over momentary and spiritually degrading lustful pleasure. Thereafter, one becomes firmly established in effortless, natural celibacy. But, till this happens, the mind continues to feel some attraction towards lustful pleasure and *is always prone to an unfortunate break in brahmacharya practice – a downfall which makes one start all over again the process of 12 years' akhand brahamacharya practice.*

In fact, the role of brahmacharya is so important that it is proper to understood it with as much clarity as possible. **For this, let us have a broad understanding of the science of kundalini:**

- Kundalini is the most refined form of vital energy (maha-prana) present in every being. It guides the physical, mental and spiritual evolution of all beings. Its activity is guided by nature in case of all beings except humans. In case of humans, there is freedom to guide the activity of kundalini because with humans conscious evolution through self-effort becomes possible.
- When kundalini resides in the lower 2 chakras (Muladhara and Swadhistana), the mind is primarily tamasic in nature.
- When kundalini resides in the 3rd chakra (manipura – navel center), the mind is tamasic plus rajasic.
- When kundalini resides in the 4th chakra (anahata – heart center), the mind is sattwic plus rajasic.
- When kundalini comes to the 5th chakra (vishuddhi – throat center), the mind is pure sattwic. The 6th chakra (agya) is also pure sattwic. And when kundalini reaches the 7th chakra, mind

dissolves into pure consciousness and experience of samadhi (absolute oneness or pure silence) happens.

Kundalini gets activated through deep concentration of mind on any creative activities – be it art, music, games, mathematics, technology, etc. But, this activation is only partial and does not lead to enlightenment or samadhi. For samadhi, the whole science of yoga has been designed.
With regular yoga practice and keeping mind sattwic (and gradually and steadily eliminating all rajasic and tamasic thoughts, speech and actions from one's life) through conscious self-effort and self-awareness, kundalini gets activated. **Perfect brahamacharya is possible only when kundalini rises to the 5th center (Vishuddhi) or higher ones. In this state, even the production of reproductive elements stops in the body, so nocturnal loss (night fall) or monthly period (menstrual loss) stops completely. This is an irreversible stage – that is, once kundalini reaches the 5th center, there is no question of downfall to lower 4 centers/chakras. One can rise only higher from 5th center. Now, the trouble of lust is over and one is established in natural brahmacharya. This is a very very high spiritual state and not even 1 in a million are in this state.** Now, the person is fully sattwic (and always remains peaceful and blissful in all kinds of trying situations). Swami Vivekananda remarked that he did not meet more than 20 sattwic people in his life despite travelling half the globe. *This is the goal which I am chasing to achieve by the end of foundation phase of Sarvodaya Mission (2009-2033).*
BUT, the great disaster is: till the 4th center (a selfless kindness for everyone is the peculiar mark of a person whose kundalini is in 4th center, whereas in lower 3 centers/chakras, one is mostly selfish with almost everyone), kundalini keeps on moving from 4th to lower and from lower to 4th center regularly, depending on one's brahmacharya level. If brahmacharya gets broken, kundalini falls down to lower chakras and then after some yoga-practice, it again ascends back to 4th center.
And to make kundalini reach 5th center requires something which is a himalayana task – it requires absolute brahmacharya practice at the level of body (with the exception of loss through night fall and monthly period) and mind as well as strong yoga-practice for at least 12 years continuously. And the whole animal heritage of millions of past lives has to be faced during this process, which tries to disrupt brahmacharya practice in some way or the other. Many sincere spiritual aspirants also get trapped and get deceived by their own minds. But, this battle, which was extremely difficult for all past great ones and will continue to be difficult for all future great ones, has to be fought persistently and won ultimately by every spiritual aspirant. A good combination of caution,right strategy, will-power, honest self-analysis and regular yoga-practice is an absolute necessity to win this battle. I hope, I will be able to win it for myself and at the end of life, give a detailed guidance to others based on personal victory. Till that happens, I can offer ideas from what I learnt in various yoga books in a friendly sense without claiming any personal moral authority.

So, let us come to the point how to do away with such chances for brahamacharya break?

II. Comprehensive guidance on how to practice unbroken brahmacharya (celibacy)

Brahmacharya is the movement from passion to peace and then, from peace to bliss.

Brahmacharya hai satya ka dwaar.

Isme milta hai anand apaar.

English meaning: Brahmacharya (celibacy) is the gateway to supreme truth: one enjoys infinite bliss through brahmacharya (celibacy).

Brahmacharya tips (the list is quite comprehensive and immensely practical):

1. Have a spiritual attitude towards opposite gender. Consider every person of opposite gender as mother, sister or daughter (father, brother or son for female aspirants) depending on the age or consider every person as Self or Consciousness. If you are already married and have children, consider the spouse as just a friend, sleep separately and practice complete brahmacharya despite being a family-person – that is a must if you want to have a decent chance for the ultimate spiritual success of Self-Realization or the good-enough spiritual success of kundalini reaching 5th centre (Vishuddhi Chakra).

2. Wake up during brahmamuhurtha. Waking up at 3 am (3 am – 7 am is most suited for reaching more joyous state during thoughtless awareness practice, as the entire atmosphere is free from thought vibrations and hence peaceful/sattwic, thus naturally deeper and more joyous state of thoughtless awareness – which is 100% peace/sattwa – is realized during this period.") and doing thoughtless awareness practice for as many hours as possible. Since lust is a rajasic (passionate) quality, with more increase in sattwa, brahmacharya automatically becomes more easy and natural. Sushumna awakens automatically during this period and kundalini automatically ascends up the spine. Anyone aiming at full celibacy must develop the solid routine of waking up at 3 am and utilizing next 4 hrs (till 7 am) in yoga, meditation (thoughtless awareness) and other creative activities like self-study, etc. This alone will solve more than 90% of difficulties one faces in the practise of full celibacy. No wonder, all our true sannyasins wake up at 3 am. Most people find celibacy so hard because they sleep even in this golden period of 3 am to 7 am when the whole nature is supporting the awakening of shushmna, raising up of kundalani and hence, a natural, fast-paced evolution of our awareness. So, this rule is exceptionally important for all sadhaks. For detailed tips on how to develop early morning routine, please read this.

3. Practice brahmacharya (celibacy) at mental level also by using these means. Whenever lustful thoughts manifest, do some thoughtless awareness technique or 5-10 round maha bandha or 3-5 min sarvangasana. This will transform the excess energy of lust into intellectual energy by pulling up the nerve currents up the spine towards brain centres, thus giving us more mental powers of thinking, concentration and memory. If doing so does not remove lust completely, do one or some of the following:

1. 10-15 min maha bandha (or uddiyana bandha) continuously. During maha bandha, one can vigorously chant some mantra also and focus the mind on the sound of mantra by trying to listen the sound – then, the effect will be more. (Set up some alarm or timer of 10-15 min so that you can focus 100% on technique.) This will transform the excess energy of lust into intellectual energy by pulling up the nerve currents up the spine towards brain centres, thus giving us more mental powers of thinking, concentration and memory.
2. 10-15 min continuous & rigorous chanting of some mantra preferably aloud and if that is not practically possible, then do it mentally. Try to listen to the sound of the mantra throughout the process – that will concentrate the mind on the sound of mantra. (Set up some alarm or timer of 10-15 min so that you can focus 100% on technique.) This will transform the excess energy of lust into intellectual energy by pulling up the nerve currents up the spine towards brain centres, thus giving us more mental powers of thinking, concentration and memory.

3. rigorous physical exercises like running fast, jogging, dand-baithak, muscle building exercises, etc. till you feel quite tired. (Excess energy of lust will get spent usefully in physical work then.)
4. indulge in your dearest hobbies like music, swimming, dancing, painting, writing blogs/articles, etc. (Excess energy of lust will get spent usefully in enjoying your hobbies then)
5. indulge in mental work on most interesting topics (Excess energy of lust will get spent usefully in enjoying the process of learning and development then)
6. talk aloud for 10-15 min or so till you become completely exhausted – this talk can be in the form of reading a good book/magazine aloud or practising oratory skill by giving long lectures on some topics so till you are fully exhausted. (Excess energy of lust will get spent usefully in practice of reading or oratory then.)
7. **as a last resort, have a cold bath or give up 1-2 meals. Cold bath will cool the nerves and giving up 1-2 meals will reduce the energy level of the body, which is excess right now, making it normal again.**
8. My guess is above things can be used to channel excess energy of anger also into constructive channels – like I feel great anger on something, I can give lecture for next 10-15 min or so on that issue aloud till I get exhausted or do physical exercises or indulge in hobbies or mental work on interesting areas. Both, lust and anger are excess energy in us which if not given a constructive channel, drag us to the sewer of crudeness and beastliness. But, when they are given a constructive channel, they will get utilized effectively in positive work.

4. Use internet filter – take no risk in the first 12 years of brahmacharya (celibacy) practice.

Make internet "brahmacharya-friendly" by installing suitable internet filters on your computer. Please watch this site http://internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com or search for "internet filter reviews" in your favorite search engine and do a thorough review. Buying the commercial filter is better as the company will keep on updating it continuously and hence, all its flaws will get removed. Even if one has to pay $50 per year, it is just $4 (close to Rs. 200) per month. When one can pay Rs. 200-300 per month for electricity, what is the problem for paying Rs. 200 for keeping oneself free from the possibility of watching adult materials while using internet – **take no risk in the first 12 years as even advanced yogis have a nasty downfall in the first 12 years of brahmacharya/celibacy practice if they expose themselves to wrong environment, what to say of less advanced spiritual aspirants then**? When using any filter, use search engine for "best setting for <filter>" and "getting the most out of <filter>". For example, if you buy "Safe Eyes", do search in your search engines (google,bing,yahoo,etc.) for "best setting for Safe Eyes" and "getting the most out of Safe Eyes" type search to find out the most powerful settings to create a brahmacharya-friendly internet environment. But, before you decide to buy a filter, do trial with a couple of them (trial is often free for 15 or 30 days) and then, buy whichever appears to be the most effective filter. "Safe Eyes" is considered the most powerful internet filter in terms of blocking harmful sites according to many independent surveys (http://www.wistv.com/Global/story.asp?s=3509166) and is almost impossible to bypass because they keep on working on their product and block even websites where any instruction on bypassing/disabling it is present. Also in Internet Explorer browser, you can block any website on-the-fly without needing administrative password. The cost is $50 per year (annual renewal of the software license is required), but the quality of the software is incomparable. Give it a try. Some more important notes below:

1. **You should create a very difficult password (so that you cannot bypass the filter) and make any of your friend or filter.gye@gmail.com (ref: to http://www.guardyoureyes.org/?p=24) or sarvodaya.mission@gmail.com as the administrator for the filter.**

2. **Additional Note:** In case you visit a cyber-cafe, it may not have installed any such filter to earn more money by getting more customers to visit internet for adult content. The best thing for you to do then is to pick a publicly visible place in the cyber-cafe for your internet surfing.

5. Avoid all visual stimulation for lustful sanskara to manifest. Avoid looking at exciting images in books and magazines. All precautions should be taken in first 12 years of brahmacharya practice. After that, so many precautions will not be needed as mind will become strongly embedded with brahmacharya sanskara.

6. Regularly read greatly inspiring brahmacharya quotes to strengthen the brahmacharya sanskara (impression of subconscious mind) and resolve whole life. This will inspire you a lot and intensify your motivation. A low motivation is not enough for brahmacharya practice. Only a fully motivated person succeeds in maintaining unbroken celibacy ("akhand brahmacharya"). One may choose any pattern of reading depending on one's success level of brahmacharya practice in the past. But, I think spending some time at least once every week is good for every spiritual aspirant till his/her Kundalini reaches Vishuddhi. *My personal recommendation for everyone is to spend 20 min every day in the morning on spiritual reading – 10 min on brahmacharya and 10 min on meditation and Self-Realization topics from scriptures like Gita, Upanishads, Patanjali Yoga-Sutra and life-stories of great sages. This is because our mind needs the spiritual food of soul-elevating thoughts daily as much as our body needs daily the material food for its nutrition needs.* Meditation and brahmacharya are two wings of spiritual success. One has to achieve perfection in both to realize the ultimate goal of Self-Realization. Perfection of one helps the other. With more growth of brahmacharya practice, meditative experiences become deeper. With deeper meditative experiences, the mind starts remaining in the state of brahmacharya more naturally and much longer. So, both go hand-in-hand and lead us to Self-bliss. Hence, this recommendation of 10 min reading for both of the two on daily basis in the morning itself (because a calm mind in morning will get easily impressed with these strong thoughts of brahmacharya and Self-Realization which, in turn, will substantially speed up our spiritual progress.)

III. Greatly Inspiring Brahmacharya (Celibacy) Quotes

Using two huge sources http://gopalkrishna.mission.googlepages.com/selfControl.htm and http://docs.google.com/Doc?docid=dftvb2vq_45fbt5rfc7&hl=en and other sites on internet, I collected the following greatly inspiring, brahmacharya quotes for my 10 min reading every day in the morning, just after finishing early morning yoga-practice:

Quotes by Swami Sivananda (a Self-Realized sage; the founder of Divine Life Society, Rishikesh)

1. If you can remain as an Akhanda Brahmachari, an unbroken celibate, for a period of twelve years, you will realize God immediately without any further Sadhana. You will have achieved the goal of life. Mark the word 'Akhanda'.
2. In a narrow sense, Brahmacharya is celibacy. In a broad sense, it is absolute control of all the senses. The door of Nirvana (liberation) or perfection is complete Brahmacharya. Celibacy is to a Yogi what electricity is to an electric bulb. **Without celibacy no spiritual progress is possible.** It is a potent weapon and shield to wage war against the internal evil forces of lust, anger and greed. It serves as a gateway for the bliss beyond, and opens the door of liberation. It contributes perennial joy and uninterrupted bliss. **It is the only key to open the Sushumna (the chief among**

astral tubes in the human body running inside the spinal column) and awaken the Kundalini (the primordial cosmic energy located in the individual).

3. People talk of celibacy; but practical men are rare, indeed. A life of continence is really beset with difficulties. It is easy to tame a tiger or a lion or an elephant. It is easy to play with a cobra. It is easy to walk over the fire. It is easy to uproot the Himalayas. It is easy to get victory in the battlefield. But, it is difficult to eradicate lust. Lack of spiritual Sadhana is the main cause for all sexual attractions. Mere theoretical abstention from sensuality will not bring you good results. You must mercilessly cut off all formalities in social life and lead a pious life. Leniency to internal lower tendencies will land you in the region of suffering. Excuse will not be of use in this respect. You must be sincere in your purpose for the sublime life of spirituality. Half-heartedness will leave you in your old state of misery.
4. **DANGER OF REACTION**
    1. You will have to be very careful of reaction. The senses that are put under restraint for some months, or for one or two years, become rebellious if you are not always vigilant and careful. They revolt and drag you out when opportunities arise. Some people, who observe celibacy for one or two years, become more passionate and waste the energy considerably in the end. Some people become incorrigible, moral wrecks also.
    2. You must not labour under the delusion that you have eradicated lust completely by adjusting the diet a bit, by practicing Pranayama, and by doing a little Japa, and that you have nothing more to do. Temptation may overcome you at any moment. Eternal vigilance and rigorous Sadhana are very essential.
    3. You may be able to stop copulation for months and years, but there should not be any sexual craving or attraction for the opposite sex. The state of mental celibacy must be kept up even amidst temptations and sickness. Then only you are safe. **The senses begin to revolt during times of ailment and also when you come in contact with sense-objects.**
    4. **Even advanced aspirants who have made great progress in Yoga should be very careful. They should not mix freely with** members of opposite gender. They should not foolishly imagine that they have become great adepts in Yoga. A great saint of repute had a downfall. He freely mixed with ladies made lady disciples and allowed them to shampoo his legs. As the sex-energy was not completely sublimated and turned into Ojas, as lust was lurking in a subtle form in his mind, he became a victim. He lost his reputation. The sexual desire was only suppressed in him and when a suitable opportunity came, it again assumed grave form. He had no strength or will-power to resist the temptation. Another great soul who was regarded by his disciples as an Avatara became a Yoga-bhrashta. He also freely mixed with ladies and committed serious crimes. He became a prey to lust. **What a sad misfortune! Aspirants climb with great difficulty by the ladder of Yoga and they are irrecoverably lost for ever on account of their carelessness and spiritual pride.**
    5. You cannot attain perfect celibacy by limited effort. Just as a machine-gun is necessary to kill a powerful enemy, so also, constant, rigorous and powerful Sadhana is necessary to annihilate this powerful enemy, lust. **You must not be puffed up with pride for your little achievement in celibacy. If you are put to test, you will hopelessly fail. You must be ever conscious of your shortcomings and you must constantly strive to get rid of them. The highest effort is necessary. Then you will have sanguine success in this direction.**
5. A true Brahmachari in thought, word and deed has wonderful thought-power. He can move the world. If you develop strict celibacy, Vichara Sakti and Dharana Sakti will develop. Vichara Sakti

is the power of enquiry. Dharan'a Sakti is the power of grasping and holding the Truth. If a man persistently refuses to yield to his lower nature and remains a strict celibate, the sexual energy is deflected upwards to the brain and is stored up as Ojas Sakti. Thereby the power of the intellect is intensified to a remarkable degree. The intellect becomes sharp and clear by continence. Continence increases infinitely the power of retentive memory. The strict celibate has keen and acute memory even in old age.A man who has the power of Brahmacharya can turn out immense mental, physical and intellectual work. He has a magnetic aura around his face. He can influence people by speaking just a few words or even by his very presence. He can control anger and move the whole world. Look at Mahatma Gandhi! He had acquired this power by constant and careful practice of Ahimsa, Satyam and Brahmacharya—non-violence, truth and celibacy. He influenced the world through this power alone. Through Brahmacharya and Brahmacharya alone can you get physical, mental and spiritual advancement in life.It is worth repeating that a true Brahmachari possesses tremendous energy, a clear brain, gigantic will-power, bold understanding, retentive memory and good Vichara Sakti. Swami Dayananda stopped the carriage of a Maharaja. He broke the sword with his hands. This was due to his power of Brahmacharya. Jesus, Sankara, Jnana Deva and Samarth Ramdas were all Brahmacharins.**It is worth repeating that a true Brahmachari possesses tremendous energy, a clear brain, gigantic will-power, bold understanding, retentive memory and good Vichara Sakti.**

6. Practice of Brahmacharya gives good health, inner strength, peace of mind and long life. It invigorates the mind and the nerves. It helps to conserve physical and mental energy. It augments memory, will force and brain power. It bestows tremendous strength, vigour and vitality. Strength and fortitude are obtained.The eye is the window of the mind. If the mind is pure and calm, the eye also is calm and steady. He who is established in Brahmacharya will have lustrous eyes, a sweet voice and a beautiful complexion.
7. **More:** http://www.dlshq.org/teachings/brahmacharya.htm & http://www.yoga-age.com/modern/brahma.html.

Quotes by Swami Vivekananda

1. ***Power comes to him who observes unbroken Brahmacharya for a period of twelve years***. Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power. Controlled desire leads to the highest results. Transform the sexual energy into spiritual energy. The stronger this force, the more can be done with it. Only a powerful current of water can do hydraulic mining.
2. **Swami Vivekananda attributed his phenomenal mental powers to a lifelong observance of brahmacharya.**A few days ago, a new set of the Encyclopedia Britannica had been bought for the Math. Seeing the new shining volumes, the disciple said to Swamiji, "It is almost impossible to read all these books in a single lifetime." He was unaware that Swamiji had already finished ten volumes and had begun the eleventh.Swamiji: What do you say? Ask me anything you like from these ten volumes, and I will answer you all.The disciple asked in wonder, "Have you read all these books?" Swamiji: Why should I ask you to question me otherwise?Being examined, Swamiji not only reproduced the sense, but at places the very language of the difficult topics selected from each volume. The disciple, astonished, put aside the books, saying, "This is not within human power!"Swamiji: **Do you see, simply by the observance of strict Brahmacharya (continence) all learning can be mastered in a very short time — one has an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once. It is owing to this want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our country.**

3. His childhood friend: Whatever you may say, I cannot bring myself to believe in these words. Who can come by that oratorical power of expounding philosophy which you have? Swamiji: You don't know! That power may come to all. That power comes to him who observes unbroken Brahmacharya for a period of twelve years, with the sole object of realising God I have practiced that kind of Brahmacharya myself, and so a screen has been removed, as it were, from my brain. For that reason, I need not any more think over or prepare myself for any lectures on such a subtle subject as philosophy. Suppose I have to lecture tomorrow; all that I shall speak about will pass tonight before my eyes like so many pictures; and the next day I put into words during my lecture all those things that I saw. So you will understand now that it is not any power which is exclusively my own. Whoever will practice unbroken Brahmacharya for twelve years will surely have it. If you do so, you too will get it. Our Shâstras do not say that only such and such a person will get it and not others!
4. **The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strengthContinence gives wonderful control over mankind.**The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent and this is what gave them power.
5. I heard him say on his wonderful power of retentive memory in this manner. "If a person can be continent for twelve years, he can have extraordinary memory. One must be celibate and keep his *brahmacharya* absolutely even in his dream."
6. *From Mrs. George Roorbach's reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda at Camp Taylor, California, in May 1900:*"In my first speech in this country, in Chicago, I addressed that audience as 'Sisters and Brothers of America', and you know that they all rose to their feet. **You may wonder what made them do this, you may wonder if I had some strange power. Let me tell you that I did have a power and this is it — never once in my life did I allow myself to have even one sexual thought. I trained my mind, my thinking, and the powers that man usually uses along that line I put into a higher channel, and it developed a force so strong that nothing could resist it."**
7. **During the period of sickness, abstain from anger and from lust — even if you are householders.**
8. This hideous world is Maya. Renounce and be happy. Give up the idea of sex and possessions. There is no other bond. Marriage and sex and money are the only living devils. All earthly love proceeds from the body. No sex, no possessions; as these fall off, the eyes open to spiritual vision. The soul regains its own infinite power.
9. Is there any sex-distinction in the Atman (Self)? Out with the differentiation between man and woman—all is Atman! Give up the identification with the body, and stand up!
10. Every boy should be trained to practice absolute Brahmacharya and then, and then alone faith and Shraddha will come. Chastity in thought, word and deed always and in all conditions is what is called Brahmacharya. Unchaste imagination is as bad as unchaste action. The Brahmacharin must be pure in thought, word and deed.
11. First of all, one must completely mould one's religious life in solitude, must be perfect in renunciation and **must preserve Brahmacharya without a break**. The Tamas has entered into you — what of that? Cannot the Tamas be destroyed? It can be done in less than no time!
12. What we want are Western science coupled with Vedanta, Brahmacharya as the guiding motto, and also Shraddha and faith in one's own self.
13. Knowledge should be acquired in that way, otherwise by educating yourself in the tol of a Pandit you will be only a human ape all your life. One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is like a blazing fire and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching. Mere reading that it is a sin to tell a lie will be of no use. Every boy should be trained to practice absolute Brahmacharya, and then, and then only, faith — Shraddha — will come. Otherwise, why will not one who has no Shraddha speak an untruth? In our country, the

imparting of knowledge has always been through men of renunciation. Later, the Pandits, by monopolising all knowledge and restricting it to the tols, have only brought the country to the brink of ruin. India had all good prospects so long as Tyagis (men of renunciation) used to impart knowledge.

14. But whatever be the order of genesis, the celibate teachers of the Shrutis and Smritis stand on an entirely different platform from the married ones, which is perfect chastity, Brahmacharya.
15. Founders of all good undertakings, before they launch on their desired work, must attain to the knowledge of the Atman through rigorous self – discipline. Otherwise defects are bound to occur in their work.
16. **Our motherland requires for her well-being some of her children to become such pure-souled Brahmacharins and Brahmacharinis.**
17. Teach the boys the system of Brahmacharya.
18. **In order to attain to ideal Brahmacharya one has to observe strict rules regarding chastity in the beginning. For minimum 12 years, one should keep oneself strictly aloof from the least association with the opposite gender as far as possible. When spiritual aspirants are established in the ideal of Sannyasa and brahmacharya, they will be able to mix on an equal footing with worldly men without any harm. But in the beginning 12 years, if they do not keep themself within the barriers of strict rules, they will all go wrong.**
19. People here (in USA) have found a new type of man in me. Even the orthodox are at their wit's end. And people are now looking up to me with an eye of reverence. Is there a greater strength than that of Brahmacharya — purity, my boy?
20. Describing the Indian ideal of Brahmacharya in the student's life, Swami Vivekananda said: "Brahmacharya should be like a burning fire within the veins!"
21. The Sanskrit name for a student, Brahmacharin, is synonymous with the Sanskrit word Kamajit. (One who has full control over his passions.) Our goal of life is Moksha; how can that be ever attained without Brahmacharya or absolute continence? Hence it is imposed upon our boys and youth as an indispensable condition during their studentship. The purpose of life in the West is Bhoga, enjoyment; hence much attention to strict Brahmacharya is not so indispensably necessary with them as it is with us.
22. Obedience to the Guru without questioning, and strict observance of Brahmacharya — this is the secret of success.
23. In his Raja Yoga, the Swami explains that through brahmacharya sex energy is converted into a higher form of psychic energy called 'ojas.'(Ojas, literally meaning the 'illuminating' or 'bright' is the highest form of energy in the human body. In the spiritual aspirant who constantly practises continence and purity, other forms of energy are transmuted into ojas and stored in the brain, expressing as spiritual and intellectual power). He says, "The yogis say that part of the human energy which is expressed as sex energy, in sexual thought, when checked and controlled easily becomes changed into ojas, and as the Muladhara (lowest of the six centers of consciousness) guides these, the yogi pays particular attention to that centre. He tries to take up all his sexual energy and convert it into ojas.
24. **It is only the chaste man or woman who can make the ojas rise and store it in the brain; that is why chastity has always been considered the highest virtue. A man feels that if he is unchaste, spirituality goes away, he loses mental vigour and moral stamina. That is why in all the religious orders in the world which have produced spiritual giants you always find absolute chastity insisted upon. That is why the monks came into existence, giving up marriage. There must be perfect chastity in thought, word and deed; without it the practice of Raja Yoga is dangerous, and may lead to insanity. If people practise Raja Yoga and at the same time lead an impure life, how can they expect to become yogis?"**

25. Disciple: Do you think, sir, the same consummation would be reached through the way Mataji is educating her students? These students would soon grow up and get married and would presently shade into the likeness of all other women of the common run. So I think, if these girls might be made to adopt Brahmacharya, then only could they devote their lives to the cause of the country's progress and attain to the high ideals preached in our sacred books.Swamiji: Yes, everything will come about in time. Such educated men are not yet born in this country, who can keep their girls unmarried without fear of social punishment.

Quotes by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

1. **Sri Ramakrishna** was uncompromising on the need for celibacy for God-realization. He used to tell devotees, "**To be able to realize God, one must practise absolute continence.** Sages like Sukadeva are examples of an 'urdhvareta' (a person of unbroken and complete continence). Their chastity was absolutely unbroken.**A man practising unbroken brahmacharya for twelve years develops a special power. He grows a new inner nerve called the nerve of memory. Through that nerve he remembers all, he understands all.When a man succeeds in the conservation of his sexual energy, his intellect reflects the image of Brahman. The man who carries this image of Brahman in his heart is able to accomplish everything – he will succeed wonderfully in whatever action he engages himself.**
2. **The loss of reproductive elements dissipates a person's strength. But there is no harm in nocturnal emission. That reproductive element is from food. After nocturnal emission, a man retains enough to succeed. But he must not lose it voluntarily.** What remains after nocturnal emission is very refined. The Lahas stored pots of molasses[18] with holes in the bottom. After a year it was found that the molasses had turned into crystals, like sugar candy. Whatever liquid there was had come out through the holes.
3. Sri Ramakrishna (*to Mahima*): "What you were saying about men of continence is correct. One cannot hold these spiritual teachings without practising brahmacharya. **Someone said to Chaitanya Deva, 'You give the devotees so much instruction. Why aren't they able to make much progress?' He replied, 'They squander it all by breaking brahmacharya. That's why they're not able to hold on to spiritual instruction.'** If you fill a leaky pail with water, the water trickles out little by little."
4. Sri Ramakrishna (to Balaram) — **Maya is only 'lust and greed'. By living in the midst of them for a few days, one loses spiritual awareness but feels that all is well.** A scavenger carries a pot of excreta and in course of time, doesn't feel any repulsion for it. One gradually acquires love and devotion for God by practicing the chanting of the Lord's name and glories.
5. **If you want to realize God, you will have to be a brahmachari. Without practising brahmacharya, one cannot concentrate steadily on God. From brahmacharya comes intellectual conviction and then comes faith in the power of Brahman. Without this faith, one cannot feel that he is living in Brahman. Practise japam (repetition of the holy mantra) and meditation day and night. This is the way one can get rid of attachment to lust and gold.**
6. **When a man succeeds in the conservation of his sexual energy, his intellect reflects the image of Brahman, even as a glass gives a perfect image when its back is painted with mercury solution. The man who carries this image of Brahman in his heart is able to accomplish everything–he will succeed wonderfully in whatever action he engages himself.**
7. "As long as you have even a little consciousness of 'I,' you are under the jurisdiction of the Primal Power – and unable to set yourself free.
8. **Sri Ramakrishna and principle of yoga – 'lust and greed' are impediments to yoga – You ask me why you don't develop deep dispassion. There is a reason for it. You have a strong desire**

for sense enjoyments, your mind is filled with *pravritti*[261]. I say the same to Hazra. In the countryside before they bring water to the fields, they make mud ridges on all four sides of the field so that water can't flow out. They are mud ridges, but they have water outlets here and there. There are holes. Water is brought with full force to the field, but it goes out through the holes. **Our desires are like these holes, these outlets. You may be practicing *japa* (repetition of God's name) and austerities, but at the back of your mind, you have desires for sense enjoyments. From the outlets of desire, everything leaks out.** "One catches fish with a bamboo trap. Ordinarily bamboo is straight, but when bent to the ground, it acts as a fish trap. Desire for sense enjoyments is the fish, so the mind remains bent toward the world. **If there is no desire, the mind naturally orients upward, toward the Lord. Do you know how? Like the needles of a scale. Because of the weight of 'lust and greed,' the upper needle does not align itself with the lower needle. Thus one strays from the path of yoga. Haven't you seen the flame of a lamp? It flickers by just a puff of air. The state of yoga is like the flame of a lamp where there is no wind.** Our mind is spread out in different directions. A part of it has reached Dacca, a part Delhi and another part Coochbehar. **You have to collect this mind and concentrate it to a point.** If you want a cloth worth sixteen annas[262], you have to pay this amount to the cloth merchant. **Even if there is a slight obstacle, yoga is not possible. If the telegraph wire is broken, howsoever small the break may be, it will not convey your message.**

9. **The nearer you come to God, the more tranquility you feel. Peace, peace, profound peace. The nearer you approach the holy Ganges, the cooler you feel. A dip in it is even more soothing.** On attaining the knowledge of Brahman, attachment to the world and enthusiasm for 'lust and greed' vanishes. You attain perfect peace. A piece of burning wood produces a crackling sound and gives out heat. When it is consumed and has turned to ash, all sound ceases. As soon as you get rid of attachment, the restlessness for 'lust and greed' vanishes. Finally you attain tranquility.
10. Sri Ramakrishna: "**Those through whom God will teach mankind must renounce the world. It is essential for religious teachers to renounce 'lust and greed.' Without it, their teachings are not accepted. It is not enough for them to renounce inwardly. They must also renounce outwardly. Only then can they teach mankind. If they don't, people will think that they are being asked to renounce 'lust and greed,' while they secretly enjoy them.** "An Ayurvedic physician[13] prescribed some medicine to a patient and said, 'Please come again another day and I will tell you about diet.' That day, there were a number of jars of molasses[14] in his room. The patient lived quite far away. He came another day. The physician said to him, 'Be careful about your diet. Molasses is not good for you.' When the patient had left, somebody asked the physician, 'Why did you cause him the trouble of coming here again, all that way? You could have said this to him the first day.' The physician laughed and said, 'There is a reason. I had some jars of molasses in my room that day. If I had asked him to give up molasses, he wouldn't have trusted me. He would have thought, He has so many jars of molasses in his room, he must surely be eating some of it. In that case it can't be so bad. Today I have hidden the jars; he will now believe me.' "I have seen the religious teacher[15] of the Adi [Brahmo] Samaj. I hear that he has married two or three times. And that he has grown sons. Such are religious teachers! If these people say that only the Lord is real and all else is an illusion, who will believe them? You can guess very well what kind of disciples they will have.
11. **Full renunciation is for sannyasins. They shouldn't even see the picture** of a woman**.** Women are like poison for them. They must keep at least ten cubits away or, if that's not possible, at least one cubit. Even if a woman is a great devotee, a sannyasin **shouldn't talk** to her **for long.** "A sannyasin should live in a place where he doesn't even see the face of a woman, or very rarely. "Money is also a poison for sannyasins. **When you have money, you quickly fall prey to**

anxiety, pride, physical comfort, anger, and so forth. Rajas increases. When there is rajoguna, it leads to tamoguna. So a sannyasin shouldn't touch money. 'Lust and greed' make you forget God. Why such difficult rules of conduct for a sannyasin? T**hey are there for the instruction of humanity as well as for his own good. Even if a sannyasin lives unattached, having controlled his senses, he should renounce 'lust and greed' in order to teach mankind. People will muster the courage for renunciation only if they see the one hundred percent renunciation of a sannyasin. Then only will they endeavour to renounce 'lust and greed.'** If a sannyasin doesn't impart this instruction of renunciation, who else will? **One should lead a householder's life only after attaining God.** It is like keeping butter in water after it has been churned. Janaka led the life of a householder only after attaining the knowledge of Brahman.

12. **Discrimination and dispassion. One is able to renounce the attachment to 'lust and greed' by the yoga of practice. The Gita says this. Practice brings extraordinary strength to the mind. Then you don't find it difficult to subdue the senses, to control passions like lust and anger. For instance, a tortoise doesn't bring out its limbs once it has drawn them inside its shell, even if you cut it into four pieces with an axe.** Differentiating between the real and the unreal in this manner is discrimination. Dispassion means a distaste for worldly things. This does not come about all of a sudden. It has to be practiced daily. To begin with, you have to renounce 'lust and greed' in the mind. Then, God willing, you can renounce them externally as well as internally.
13. **If you are attached to 'lust and greed,' you develop pride of learning, pride of wealth and high position – all these things** … **Sri Ramakrishna (to the devotees)** — Do you know what happens when you live as a householder? A lot of your mental powers are unnecessarily expended. This wastage of mental powers can be made up only by embracing sannyasa. Your father gives you your first birth. Your second birth is when your sacred thread ceremony is performed. And the third one is when you enter monastic life[96]. " 'Lust and greed.' These indeed are the two obstacles. The attachment to a woman leads one away from the path to the Lord. A man is unable to realize what has brought his downfall. When I went to the Fort, I hardly knew that I was going down a slope. When the carriage reached the Fort, I observed how far down I had come. Ah, She doesn't let man know! Captain said, 'My wife is spiritually wise.' When an evil spirit possesses a person, he does not know that he is possessed. He just says, 'I am all right.' (Everybody sits perfectly still.) "It is not only lust which is a danger in family life. There is anger, too. When you are thwarted in your desire, you get angry." **M. —** When a cat reaches out to snatch fish from my plate, I can't do anything about it. **Sri Ramakrishna —** Why not? You must beat it once, there is no harm in that. The householder must hiss [threaten], but never pour venom. Reason? One must not harm anybody. However, you have to make a show of anger to save yourself from the enemy or he will hurt you. But one who has renounced need not even hiss.
14. **Sri Ramakrishna: "Lovelorn! Oh, you have to be mad for God to attain Him! "This does not happen if the mind dwells on 'lust and greed.'** What joy is there in lust? One feels ten million times that joy from a vision of God. One feels the joy of union with the Atman in every pore."
15. **When a person gets even a drop of God's ecstatic love, 'lust and greed' become so insignificant!** When you get a drink sweetened with sugar candy, how can you care for one mixed with molasses? When you pray to God with a yearning heart, when you chant His name and glories incessantly, you gradually develop that kind of love for Him.
16. **The Brahmo devotee:**Lust and anger are the real enemies. What can we do about them?" **Sri Ramakrishna:** "Turn the six enemies around – towards God. Have *lust* for union with the Atman. Show *anger* to those who are an obstacle in the way to God. Have *greed* to attain Him. If you have to say, 'Me and mine,' say it in relation to Him – as, for example, 'My Krishna or my Rama.'

If you have *pride*, let it be like the pride of Bibhishana who said, 'I have bowed to Rama. This head shall never bow to anybody else.'"

17. There is a view that a man doesn't attain spiritual awakening until his desire for worldly enjoyments is over. **But what is there to enjoy? The pleasures of 'lust and greed' are momentary – this moment they exist and the next moment they disappear.** What is there in 'lust and greed'? Its enjoyment is like eating a hog-plum that is all stone and rind. Eat it and you get colic. The moment you swallow sweet sandesh, it is gone.
18. **One does not realize God unless 'lust and greed' have vanished from the mind.** The fire of spiritual wisdom first burns up lust, anger and other such enemies. Later it destroys the sense of I-ness[117]. Lastly, it brings about a great turmoil [in the body].
19. **Sri Ramakrishna —** He has seen the plight of worldly people who are forgetful of God. That is why he is developing renunciation for these things. Need one whose mind is freed from the attachment to 'lust and greed' worry about anything? "Oh, how strange! I had to perform so much repetition of the Name and meditation to get rid of these desires. How is it that he has absolutely freed his mind from desire so quickly? Is it so easy to get rid of lust? Oh, what a sensation I felt in my chest even six months after starting my spiritual practices! I would lie under a tree and weep. I cried to the Divine Mother, 'Mother! If I experience the feeling of lust, I will cut my throat with a knife!' **(To the devotees)** "If the mind is free from 'lust and greed,' what else remains to be attained? Then one enjoys only the joy of Brahman."
20. **Sri Ramakrishna (*to the devotees*):** "**You cannot achieve union with God when the mind dwells on 'lust and greed.'** The mind of an ordinary person remains in the centres of awareness located at the genital, anal, and naval regions.[2] **It takes a lot of effort in spiritual discipline for the kundalini to awaken.** There are three nerves – ida, pingala, and sushumna. And in the sushumna are six lotuses, the lowest being the muladhara. Then there are svadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddha, and ajna. These are the six spiritual centres. "When the kundalini awakens, after it has crossed the lotuses of muladhara, svadhisthana, and manipura, it reaches the anahata lotus located at the heart. It stays there. The mind is then withdrawn from the three lower centres of anus, sex organ, and navel; it attains a spiritual consciousness and sees a light. The aspirant is speechless with wonder and exclaims, 'What is this! What is this!' "Having pierced six centres, the kundalini reaches the lotus of sahasrara and unites with it. When the kundalini reaches there, the aspirant passes into samadhi. "According to the Vedas, these centres are called bhumis or planes. There are seven planes. The heart is the fourth, and the lotus at anahata is twelve-petalled."The vishuddha centre is the fifth plane. When the mind reaches there, the heart yearns only to talk of God and to hear about Him. This centre is located in the throat. It has a sixteen-petalled lotus. The person whose mind has reached this centre feels great pain to hear any worldly talk, such as talk of 'lust and greed.' When he hears such talk, he gets up and leaves the place. "After this comes the sixth plane, the ajna centre of two petals. When the kundalini reaches there, one has the vision of God's form. But there is still a thin screen of separation. Like a lantern, the light can't be touched because of a glass barrier. "Then one reaches the seventh plane, the thousand-petalled lotus. When the kundalini reaches there, samadhi comes about. The Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute Shiva resides at the sahasrara. Here He unites with Shakti – it is the union of Shiva and Shakti. "When the mind reaches the sahasrara, one becomes absorbed in samadhi. In this state all awareness of the external disappears, and the person cannot preserve his body. If milk is poured into his mouth, it runs out.
21. **Difference between the mind of a worldly man and a genuine renouncer. Girish** (to Sri Ramakrishna) — Well sir, at times the mind rises so high – and then it falls so suddenly! Why is this? **Sri Ramakrishna** — This does happen when one leads a worldly life. The mind is first up,

then down. First you feel so strong – and then so weak. You see, it is because one has to live amidst 'lust and greed'. In worldly life the devotee contemplates the Lord and repeats His name – but then he gives his mind to 'lust and greed'. He is like a housefly. Sometimes it sits on sandesh, at other times on a festering wound – and even on excreta. It is different with *tyagis* (those who have renounced the world). Taking their mind from 'lust and greed,' they give it to the Lord and only sip the sweetness of Hari's name. A genuine man of renunciation doesn't like anything but the Lord. When he hears worldly talk, he gets up and leaves. He only listens to Godly matters. The genuine renouncer talks of nothing but the Lord. The bee sits only on flowers, for it drinks honey. It likes no other thing."

22. **They who live only with 'lust and greed' – who don't think of God even once – are bound souls. What great work can they perform?** They are like mangoes pecked by crows. Such mangoes cannot be offered to the gods. Eating them yourself is also risky. Bound souls, worldly people, are like silkworms. They could come out of their cocoons if they wished, but they have built their own homes and maya does not allow them to escape. And it all ends with death. Liberated souls are not under the control of 'lust and greed'. Some clever silkworms cut their cocoons and come out. But they are very few. Because of maya (attachment), one remains forgetful. Few attain spiritual awakening, few are not deluded by the magic of maya, are not subject to the control of 'lust and greed.' When the pot[57] containing ashes from the maternity room falls on one's feet, the 'damn, damn' word of the magician can do no harm. One can see exactly what the magician is doing.
23. **…A young man sadly asked Sri Ramakrishna: "Sir, how can I get rid of lust?** I strive so hard, still I suffer from restlessness due to passion and bad thoughts." **Sri Ramakrishna:** "… Do you think I am free from it? At one time I believed that I had conquered lust. Then one day when I was seated in the Panchavati, I suddenly had such an onrush of lust that it was hard for me to maintain control! Immediately I began crying, rubbing my face in the dust, and saying to the Divine Mother: "I have made a big mistake, Mother. I shall never again think that I have conquered lust.' Only then did it subside. Do you know, you boys are now passing through a flood tide of adolescence? You can't stop it. Can an embankment or a breakwater stop a tidal wave? The overflowing water breaks through and rushes forward, and then the water stands as high as a bamboo over the paddy fields. There is a saying, 'Mental sin is not considered to be a sin in this Kaliyuga.' If a bad thought happens to arise once or twice in the mind, why should you go on brooding about it? Sometimes those feelings come and go. They are natural to the body; consider them to be physical functions like the call of nature. Do people worry when they have an urge for the call of nature? Similarly, consider those feelings to be insignificant, trifling, and worthless, and don't think of them anymore. Pray to God intensely, chant His name, and meditate on Him. Don't pay any heed to whether those feelings come or go. Gradually, they will come under control." …
24. **Sri Ramakrishna:** "'Lust and greed' are the cause of bondage. 'Lust and greed' mean worldliness. In fact it is 'lust and greed' that keep one from seeing God." Saying this, Thakur covers his face with a hand towel and says, "Can you see me now? This is a veil. When the veil of 'lust and greed' is removed, one attains consciousness-bliss.[5] "Just see. Whoever has given up the joy of lust has renounced the joy of the world. God is very near to this person." Some of the devotees are standing, others are sitting, as they silently listen to these words. (*To Kedar, Vijay, and others*) "He who has given up the pleasure of lust has given up the pleasures of the world. This 'lust and greed' is truly the veil. You show off such big moustaches, and you are still immersed in it. Tell me truly. Search your mind and see if it isn't so." **Vijay:** "Sir, it is true."

25. **Those who live amidst 'lust and greed' aren't able to understand because of their inebriation.** Chess players often don't know if a move is right until the game has continued for some time. But onlookers from a distance can see and understand the game better.
26. In the state of a paramahamsa one becomes like a child. A five-year-old does not distinguish between a man and a woman. Even so, the paramahamsa has to be careful to set a good example.
27. **Why was Keshab Sen not able to teach people?**Keshab Sen was associated with 'lust and greed.' It hindered his teaching of humanity. That is what Thakur is saying. **Sri Ramakrishna:** "He (Keshab) – do you understand?" **Vijay:** "Yes, sir." **Sri Ramakrishna:** "He (Keshab Sen) tried to take care of both the worldly and the spiritual. So he couldn't achieve very much."
28. **Why did Chaitanya Deva renounce the world? Vijay:** "Chaitanya Deva said to Nityananda, 'Nitai, if I hadn't renounced the world, people would not be helped. They would all want to live a worldly life. Nobody would try to give his whole mind to the lotus feet of God by renouncing 'lust and greed.'" **Sri Ramakrishna:** Chaitanya Deva renounced the world to set an example. "A sadhu renounces 'lust and greed' for his own good. And then even when he has become detached, he must not allow a woman or gold near him, to set an example. A man of renunciation, the sannyasin, is a world teacher. Just seeing him gives spiritual awakening."
29. **"One may wash a cup that contains garlic many times, but the smell of garlic will not leave the cup. The boys who have not touched 'lust and gold' are pure vessels. When a person is rubbed with the garlic of 'lust and gold' for a considerable time, the smell of garlic persists in him.** "They are like mangoes pecked at and defiled by crows. Such a mango cannot be offered to Bhagavan. It is suspect even for personal use. It is as different as new earthen pots and the pots in which milk was once turned into curds. It is not safe to keep pure milk in vessels that once contained curds. The chances are that the milk will turn sour.**"With 'lust and greed' always around you, how is it possible to realize God? It is very hard indeed to live unattached in their midst. In the first place, one is a slave of one's spouse. In the second place, one is a slave to money. And in the third place, one is a slave to him whom one serves for the sake of his living.**
30. **M. — Will one always have to perform spiritual practices? Sri Ramakrishna —** No, in the beginning you must be up and doing, but you don't have to work so hard later on. As long as there are storms, tempests and rough water, the boat has to be steered along zigzag routes; so long does the boatman stand and hold the rudder – but he no longer does so when he is past them. When the boat rounds a bend and a favourable wind blows, he can sit down and relax and just touch the rudder. Then he prepares to hoist the sail and sits down for a smoke. There is peace when the storm and tempest of 'lust and greed' pass.
31. Some people show signs of yoga. But even they have to be careful. 'Lust and greed' are the obstacles to yoga. They make one deviate from yoga and fall into worldliness – if there is still any desire for sense enjoyment.
32. **If the mind is restless, yoga is not possible. The wind of the world always distracts the flame of the mind. When the flame does not waver, one attains a perfect state of yoga.** 'Lust and greed' are obstacles to yoga. You must discriminate: what is there in human body but blood, flesh, fat, intestines, worms, urine, faeces and so on. Why love such a body? … "Worldly people are intoxicated – inebriated with 'lust and greed'. They have lost their awareness. That is why I am fond of the young men. 'Lust and greed' have not yet entered their minds. They are 'good receptacles' and can be of use in the Lord's work. Worldly people are full of worthless stuff.
33. **"'Lust and greed' is maya. One attains union with God when the mind is rid of these two.** The Atman, the Supreme Soul, is the magnet. The embodied soul is like a needle. When the former pulls the latter, it results in union. But if the needle is covered with dirt, the magnet can't pull it. When, however, the dirt is removed, it is drawn again. You have to clean yourself of the dirt of

'lust and greed.'"**Mukherji: "How can we do this?"Sri Ramakrishna:** "Weep for God with a longing heart. The water of your tears will wash off the dirt. And then the magnet can pull it. Only then will you attain union with God." **Mukherji:** "Oh, wonderful!" **Sri Ramakrishna:**[6] occurs by itself. Samadhi comes after that. "And then there is the practice of meditation. Shiva manifests especially in the Sahasrara. Meditate on Him. The body is like a saucer, and the mind and intellect are like water. In this water, the sun of Sat-chit-ananda is reflected. By meditating on that reflected sun, one has the revelation of the real sun through God's grace." "When you can weep for God, He grants His vision. And you attain samadhi. Perfection in yoga is samadhi. When you weep, suspension of breath

34. **Why family life? – when desire for enjoyment is over, one feels yearning for God and realizes Him. A devotee:** "Why has He kept us in the world?"**Sri Ramakrishna:** "To keep the creation going. That is His will. That is His maya. God has bewitched us with 'lust and greed.'"**A devotee:** "Why has He bewitched us? Why does He will this?" **Sri Ramakrishna:** "**If He granted the bliss of God even once, no one would live a householder's life. And that would lead to the end of creation.** Rice is stocked in big bags in a warehouse. So that rats don't find the rice, the grain dealer keeps some puffed and sweetened rice in a husking pan. The rats like the sweetened rice and eat it through the night. They don't look for the bagged rice. But look, you can make fourteen times the volume of one seer of rice with puffed sweetened rice. **How great is the bliss of God compared to the joy of 'lust and greed!'** Contemplating His beauty, even the beauty of Rambha and Tilottama appears like ashes from a fire." **A devotee:** "Why don't we develop that yearning to realize God?" **Sri Ramakrishna:** "A person doesn't feel yearning for God until the desire for enjoyment is over. Until the desire for 'lust and greed' is satisfied, a person doesn't remember the Mother of the Universe. A child busy playing doesn't look for his mother. When his play is over, he says, 'I want to go to my mother.' Once Hriday's son was playing with a pigeon. He was calling out to it, 'Come here, tee tee!' As soon as he had enough of playing, he began to cry. A stranger came by and said, 'Come, I'll take you to your mother.' The boy even climbed on the man's shoulders to be taken. "**Those who are born perfect don't have to go through the householder's life. They are already free from the desire for enjoyments since their birth.**"
35. **Four classes of men attachment to 'woman and gold' is the sign of worldly man**: **Sri Ramakrishna —** Four classes of human beings have been stated the bound souls, the seekers after liberation, the liberated and the ever free. The world is like the fishing net, the *jiva* (individual soul) like the fish and the Lord (whose maya constitutes the world) is the fisherman. When fishes fall into the fisherman's net many of them try to tear the net to escape, i.e. they try to free themselves. They are like the men seeking liberation. However, all those who try to escape cannot run away. Only a few fishes slip out with a splash. Then people call out, 'There goes the big fish.' Such two or four beings are the liberated ones. Some fishes are so cautious by nature that they never fall into the net. Narada and such other saints are ever free; they never fall in the net of the world. However, most of the fish keep lying in the net unaware of the fact that they have fallen into a net and will die. Remaining in the net, they dart straight ahead taking the net along and try to hide their body into the mud. They make no attempt to escape, rather they fall deeper into the mud. They are like the bound souls. They live in the net and think, 'We are quite happy here.' **The bound *jivas* remain attached to the world that is to 'woman and gold'. They remain sunk in the sea of evil and think that they are very happy there.** Those who seek for liberation and those who are liberated look upon the world as a death well, they don't like it. So, some of them having attained jnana and the vision of Bhagavan give up their bodies. However, giving up body in this way is a far cry. "**The bound creatures, the worldly men, don't get awareness by any means. They suffer so much misery, so many trials,**

and so many sorrows; even then they don't get awakening. The camel likes thorny bushes but the more it eats, the more it bleeds from its face. Even so, it continues to eat the same thorny bush and does not leave it. **The worldly man suffers so much agony, so much sorrow, yet he reverts back to his old self quite soon. Perhaps his wife has died or she has proved faithless to him, yet he marries again. Perhaps he has lost his son and suffered so much of sorrow, yet he forgets all this in a few days. The mother of this boy, who was beside herself with grief, ties up her hair again and bedecks herself with jewellery. In the same way though people spend all in the marriage of their daughters, they continue giving birth to more children year after year. They lose all in litigation. Yet they again go to law! They cannot feed the children they have, neither can they educate them, nor can they look after them properly, still they beget more children every year.** At times, their state can be likened to that of the snake trying to swallow the mole. The snake cannot swallow the mole, nor can it give it up. The bound soul may have realized that there is no substance in the world that it is like a hog plum that has nothing but stone and skin yet he cannot give it up. Even though he cannot turn his mind towards the Lord. A relative of Keshab Sen, fifty years old, was playing cards, as if time was not yet ripe for him to think of the Lord. The bound *jiva* has yet another sign. If he is lifted from worldly life to a better place, he will pine away to death. The worm of faeces feels pleasure in the excreta alone; it is only there that it thrives. If you put it in a pot of rice, it will die." (All laugh.)

36. Sri Ramakrishna — **The very ego of man is maya. This egotism has veiled everything. All troubles cease when the I-ness dies**. **If by the grace of the Lord a man realizes, 'I am not the doer,' he becomes a *jivanmukta[4]*. He has nothing to fear then.** The maya or the I-ness is like a cloud. The sun becomes invisible even if there is a patch of cloud. As soon as the cloud passes away, one can see the sun. If by the grace of the Guru the feeling of I-ness vanishes, one realizes the Lord… You can get rid of I-ness when you have attained jnana (spiritual knowledge). On attaining jnana, you go into samadhi. **Only in samadhi does I-ness disappear.** But it is very difficult to attain this jnana. **The Vedas say that I-ness vanishes only when the mind ascends to the seventh plane. It is only after attaining samadhi, that I-ness disappears.** Where does the mind generally dwell? In the first three planes at the organs of generation and evacuation, and at the navel. Here the mind remains only attached to the world, to 'lust and gold'. When the mind dwells in the heart, one sees the divine light. While seeing this light, one exclaims, 'O, what is this! What is this!' The next plane is at the throat. On this plane one likes to hear and speak only of the Lord. When the mind goes to the forehead, between the eyebrows, one sees the form of Sachchidananda. One has the desire to embrace and touch this very form, but one cannot. Though the flame in the lantern can be seen but it cannot be touched. You feel as if you are just touching it but you cannot. **When the mind ascends to the seventh plane, I-ness vanishes one goes into samadhi.** The 'I' that makes one worldly, attaches one to 'lust and gold' is the 'rascal I'. Because of its intervention the *jiva* and the atman appear apart. If a stick is put on water, it appears to be divided into two. In reality the water is one but it appears to be two because of the stick. **I-ness is the stick. Remove the stick, the water will become one as before.** What is the 'rascal I'? That which says, 'Don't you know me? I have so much money. Who is greater than me?' If a thief steals ten rupees, first of all this man snatches the money from him and gives him a good beating. He doesn't leave him even then. He sends for the watchman and handing him over to the police gets him punished. The 'rascal I' says, 'Don't you know, you stole my ten rupees. Such impertinence!' " ….. **Vijay** — How can one see the Lord? **Sri Ramakrishna** — Not till the mind is purified. Living amidst 'lust and gold,' the mind remains soiled, it remains covered with their dirt. If the needle is covered with mud, the magnet does not attract it. But when the mud and dirt are washed off, the magnet attracts. You can wash the dirt of the mind with the water of your eyes. If you weep with tears of repentance, saying, 'O Lord, I shall never

do such a thing again,' then this dirt is washed away. Then the magnet of the Lord attracts the needle of the mind. You then go into samadhi and have the vision of the Lord. **But you may try a thousand times, nothing is achieved without God's grace. Without His grace you cannot see Him. Is it easy to gain His grace? You will have to get rid of your egoism completely. When you have the feeling that you are the doer, you cannot see the Lord.**

37. Unless you give up pride, you can't attain spiritual knowledge. Water doesn't stay on the top of a mound. It flows down quickly on all sides to the ground below.

Quotes by Sri Aurobindo

1. We have stated, as succinctly as is consistent with clearness, the main psychological principles on which the ancient Indians based their scheme of education. **By the training of Brahmacharya they placed all the energy of which the system was capable and which could be spared from bodily functions, at the service of the brain. In this way they not only strengthened the medh? or grasping power, the dh? or subtlety and swiftness of thought conception, the memory and the creative intellectual force, making the triple force of memory, invention, judgment comprehensive and analytic, but they greatly enlarged the range, no less than the intensity, of the absorbing, storing and generative mental activities.** Hence those astonishing feats of memory, various comprehension and versatility of creative work of which only a few extraordinary intellects have been capable in Occidental history, but which in ancient India were common and usual. …… **This easy and unfailing illumination crowning the unfailing energy created by Brahmacharya was due to the discipline which developed *sattva* or inner illumination. This illumination makes the acquisition of knowledge and all other intellectual operations easy, spontaneous, swift, decisive and comparatively unfatiguing to body or brain. In these two things lies the secret of Aryan intellectual achievement, Brahmacharya and sattwic development created the brain of India: it was perfected by Yoga.**
2. **The practice of Brahmacharya is the first and most necessary condition of increasing the force within and turning it to such uses as may benefit the possessor or mankind.** All human energy has a physical basis. The mistake made by European materialism is to suppose the basis to be everything and confuse it with the source. The source of life and energy is not material but spiritual, but the basis, the foundation on which the life and energy stand and work, is physical. The ancient Hindus clearly recognised this distinction between k?ra?a and prati??h?, the north pole and the south pole of being. Earth or gross matter is the prati??h?, Brahman or spirit is the k?ra?a. To raise up the physical to the spiritual is Brahmacharya, for by the meeting of the two the energy which starts from one and produces the other is enhanced and fulfills itself.This is the metaphysical theory. The application depends on a right understanding of the physical and psychological conformation of the human receptacle of energy. The fundamental physical unit is the *retas*, in which the *tejas*, the heat and light and electricity in a man, is involved and hidden. All energy is latent in the *retas*. This energy may be either expended physically or conserved. All passion, lust, desire wastes the energy by pouring it, either in the gross form or a sublimated subtler form, out of the body. **Immorality in act throws it out in the gross form; immorality of thought in the subtle form. In either case there is waste, and unchastity is of the mind and speech as well as of the body. On the other hand, all self-control conserves the energy in the *retas*, and conservation always brings with it increase. But the needs of the physical body are limited and the excess of energy must create a surplus which has to turn itself to some use other than the physical. According to the ancient theory *retas* is *jala* or water, full of light and heat and electricity, in one word, of *tejas*. The excess of the *retas* turns first into heat or *tapas* which stimulates the whole system, and it is for this reason that all forms of self-control and**

austerity are called *tapas* or tapasy? because they generate the heat, or stimulus which is a source of powerful action and success; secondly, it turns to *tejas* proper, light, the energy which is at the source of all knowledge; thirdly, it turns to *vidyut* or electricity, which is at the basis of all forceful action whether intellectual or physical. In the *vidyutojas*, or pr??a?akti, the primal energy which proceeds from ether. The *retasjala* to *tapas*, *tejas* and *vidyut* and from *vidyut* to *ojas*, fills the system with physical strength, energy and brain-power and in its last form of *ojas* rises to the brain and informs it with that primal energy which is the most refined form of matter and nearest to spirit. It is *ojas* that creates a spiritual force or virya, by which a man attains to spiritual knowledge, spiritual love and faith, spiritual strength. It follows that the more we can by Brahmacharya increase the store of *tapas*, *tejas*, *vidyut* and *ojas*, the more we shall fill ourselves with utter energy for the works of the body, heart, mind and spirit.

Quotes by Jesus Christ

1. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb; there are some eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive let him receive. – from Bible (Math. xix. 12)
2. "Do not say that you have a chaste mind if your eyes are unchaste, because an unchaste eye betrays an unchaste heart." St. Augustine

Quotes by Sri Adi Sankaracharya

1. Brahmacharya or spotless chastity is the best of all penances; a celibate of such spotless chastity is not a human being, but a god indeed… To the celibate who practises unbroken brahmacharya, what is there unattainable in this world? By the power of the unbroken brahmacharya, one will become just like myself.
2. In his celebrated work "**Vivekachudamani**," **Sri Sankaracharya**, one of the brightest stars in the philosophical and religious firmament of India, has this advice for spiritual aspirants: "If, indeed, thou hast a craving for liberation, shun sense-objects from a good distance as thou wouldst do poison, and always cultivate carefully the nectar-like virtues of contentment, compassion, forgiveness, straight-forwardness, calmness and self-control."

Quotes by Swami Chidananda (a Self-Realized sage; a disciple of Swami Sivananda)

1. **The spiritual life starts with your recognition that as long as you keep going headlong in the pursuit of sense satisfaction and pleasure, you are not going to move one step.** So all will be academic and theoretical. Our aspiration, our wanting spiritual life will only be in theory—a fancy and a feeling. You have not started. So the beginning stage itself of the spiritual life is a turning away from sense experience and sense indulgence and starting to move in the opposite direction. It is perhaps precisely for this reason that Maharshi Patanjali put brahmacharya right at the very commencement of his eight-stage Raja Yoga and not at any later stage. It is one of the five vows that constitute the first stage. If he had thought that it was only important or essential at a later stage, he would have brought it in at the third or fourth stage. But no, he did it at the very beginning.
2. **The third key to success is also something that I myself have used right from the very beginning, and I think it is the ultimate answer.** The real secret of success in brahmacharya, the

real key, is what I'm just now going to state. The moment you begin to think that I am Atman, unborn, nameless, formless, I have neither body nor mind, I am Satchidananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute), Self-sufficient, I am of the very nature of Bliss Absolute–if you thus totally shift your consciousness to your reality, to your essential, eternal, true identity, then, finished! Brahmacharya is no longer a problem. The problem of brahmacharya ceases to exist except only once in a while due to old impressions. If some factor outside of you happens to act as a stimulus, then an idea may come. Mind you, it is not only what your mental-intellectual mechanism thinks about yourself, it is also your feeling about yourself. If both your thinking and feeling are elevated to such a height, elevated to that dimension–it's not only a question of height, it's a different dimension altogether–and you move into that dimension, this lower dimension ceases to be of importance, ceases to have any impact upon you. It is there; it may function, but you are not at all affected by it in any way. Once you start cultivating staying put in the consciousness of your own essential identity, then brahmacharya is no longer a problem. It is solved. So the ultimate key to success in brahmacharya is atma bhava, to become absolutely convinced that you are something totally beyond body, mind, senses etc. The mind, due to its habitual wrong thinking, may periodically bring in a contrary idea that "I am so and so." Be indifferent to it. Dismiss it as nonsense. Refuse to entertain it. Don't pay any attention to it. Just be. Abide in your own Self. This is the master key more than anything else.

3. **Actually, the vast, vast majority of human beings are human animals only; they are totally rooted in body consciousness.** So the yogi says that their consciousness only revolves in the lowest three centers, that is food, sex and lower elimination. If some higher awakening comes and they develop compassion for others, a spirit of service, wanting to make others happy, then the consciousness occasionally manifests itself in the fourth center, the center of feeling.If the consciousness persists in the upward trend of spiritual evolution and ideal living, it can come to the vishuddha chakra where one can have many subjective experiences, visions etc., but still the experiences come and go and the consciousness moves up and down, up and down. If consciousness rises further to the ajna chakra, one tends to be more and more stable, established, because it is the center of the mind, the psyche. **But it is only when consciousness comes to the sahashrara that there is no longer a chance of a downfall. One is above body consciousness. One is not aware of oneself as a body. One does not think or feel or conceive of oneself as a physical entity at all. There is no moving down. Consciousness is firmly established. But until then there is always a need to be vigilant.**
4. **Man is a mixture of three ingredients: first, an animal with all the physical propensities and sense urges that one shares in common with animals; second, the rational, logical human level; and third, the dormant Divinity, the sleeping God within.** The whole of the spiritual life is a gradual elimination, eradication, of the animal within, and the refinement or purification and education of the entire human nature so that it stops its movement in all other directions and starts taking on an ascending vertical direction. Once the human nature is given an upward turn, one simultaneously starts awakening the sleeping Divinity with the help of all one's spiritual practices.If one knows that the spiritual process, the spiritual life, is the elimination of the animal, the refining and directing upwards of the human, and the awakening and unfoldment of the Divine, then all spiritual practices, including the role that brahmacharya plays, fall into their right place.
5. **Brahmacharya or celibacy is a rational process of preserving and conserving precious energy so that it can be utilized in other very essential and indispensable functions.** And if it is preserved like this, it can be converted, just as tangible, gross water is converted into subtle steam. Then it can do wonders. A river may not have much power in it by itself. You may be easily able to row or swim across it. But, if it is dammed up and its waters conserved, then it has

the power, when properly channelled, to turn huge turbines and produce electricity. The hot sun, even in summer, does not normally cause a fire, but if you concentrate its rays through a lens, those rays will immediately burn whatever they are focused on. That is what celibacy actually is.

6. **This cosmic force manifests in our own system as prana (vital energy, life force).** And prana is the precious reserve of the seeker. Any sense activity or sense experience consumes a lot of prana. And the activity that consumes the greatest amount of prana is the sex act. Gurudev has put it very strongly: "It shatters the entire nervous system." Because it creates great excitement, great agitation, and such an intensity of feeling that as an aftermath it leaves the person exhausted and depleted.The highest of all goals in human life–spiritual attainment–requires the maximum available pranic energy on all levels: mental, intellectual and emotional. It is through prana that one has to restrain one's senses. It is through prana that one has to still the restless activity of the mind. It is through prana that one has to centralize all the scattered rays of the mind and make it one-pointed in concentration. It is through prana that one has to direct the concentrated mind upon the object of meditation.Prana is required for spiritual reflection and discrimination. The thinking must be sharp and the intellect penetrating. To understand the inner implications of a guru's instructions requires a special type of intelligence. You may be a very intellectual person, and you may immediately grasp the language meaning of something the guru is telling you, but if the guru is speaking of a abstruse subject not within the normal range of your ordinary human experience, you require a special subtle type of understanding. And that understanding develops through brahmacharya.So as I said, all these various practices require the use of prana, and celibacy insures that an abundance of pranic reserve is available to the seeker. So viewed from this angle, it is a rational and very positive process.
7. **This is the rationale behind celibacy.** If you conserve this vital energy and divert it to the spiritual process of contemplation, philosophical study and reflection, and meditation, it becomes successful, because you have concentrated your force and you are able to direct the concentrated force by focusing it upon your spiritual practices. If it is preserved, concentrated and diverted into a specific channel, it works wonders
8. **Vedanta long ago probed into this subject of the human situation, and the sages saw clearly that 999 persons out of every 1000 or 9,999 out of every 10,000 were completely caught up in a state of "I am this body."** They knew of their identity only as a physical entity, a being with hands and feet and ears and eyes, eating, drinking, sleeping, talking, doing things. So they are totally body- bound. Their consciousness is held upon the level of the physical body. This is the situation. But the goal of the spiritual seeker is Cosmic Consciousness, which is their inner reality beyond time, space, name and form. So, when you juxtapose their present state of consciousness and the experience they wish to attain, you can just imagine how impossible this would be if they go on perpetuating this total identification with the physical body and all its processes. Among all these bodily processes, most have become mechanical. Most people are not intensely aware of eating, drinking, sleeping, voiding. All these things have become automatic. But the one process that most of them purposefully engage in, with great desire for it–wanting it, thinking about it, planning for it and going after it–is sex enjoyment, which means that this is a process that concentrates their entire consciousness, entire mind, entire attention upon the physical, their physical identity. From one angle the sex act is the acme of physicality or animality. It is a process that perforce directs your entire attention upon the physical, and even more, the full focusing of your desire and intention upon that part of your physical nature that you share in common with the entire animal kingdom. Is this going to be in any way helpful for attaining Cosmic Consciousness? So here is a human being, the crown, and glory of God's creation, high above all the rest of the living species, going down to the gross, physical, material

animal level and giving oneself totally to it–seeking it, wanting it, going after it, doing everything one can in order to obtain it, indulging in it, and wanting to have it always available. That means that one is voluntarily binding oneself down to a level of physical consciousness. If you are a spiritual seeker, can you not see that you are working against yourself? You have to liberate your consciousness from the lesser levels and go on lifting it to progressively higher and higher levels of finer and more refined states. For if the whole of the spiritual process of illumination and enlightenment is a process of rising into a higher state of consciousness, it automatically implies liberating yourself from a lower state of consciousness. If you want to move northward it means moving away from the south. **And one of the things that helps you to free yourself from being caught in this physical level is celibacy. Cosmic Consciousness, Absolute Consciousness, is a far cry if you don't recognize the necessity of liberating yourself from your total identification with the body.**

9. **So brahmacharya is neither repressing sexuality nor avoiding sexuality.** It is just bypassing sexuality–making use of this sexual potential for some thing ten times, a hundred times greater. Therefore, the question of repression and suppression is a misnomer. It is due to a lack of proper understanding of what the real spiritual quest is. If it is understood, then these terms will not be used. We are not just human beings; we are more than human beings. Our human status is only a pale reflection of what we really are.
10. **If you want to understand the practice of celibacy through an analogy that is within the thought forms of today, consider an athlete whose great ambition is to win a gold medal at the Olympics.** He will willingly put himself into the hands of a trainer, and if the trainer says, "No more late night revelry, no more sex, no more junk food, no more alcohol," the athlete readily agrees. He says: "I'll agree to this and more also if you want it." Why? Because he wants the gold medal. And no one raises an eyebrow, no one is outraged. Why? Because the gold medal justifies all these so-called "inhibitions." You cannot say that he's doing violence to or repressing himself, because he is not looking at it that way. He is willing to do anything that the trainer demands of him. It is not imposed upon him by other people. We understand why he is doing it and we accept it.**On the contrary, what appears to be a sort of denial is actually giving full self-expression to a higher dimension of your being into which you have now placed yourself.** So, far from denying self-expression, it is giving full expression to yourself because you are no longer identified with the lesser aspect of your total personality. You are identified with the higher aspect. It is a sort of a liberation and evolution to a higher level. It is something positive, creative, and not anything negative. It is not a denial but an actual expression of yourself in the form of a keen aspiration and a noble ambition.
11. **For example, the Ramakrishna Mission keeps a person as a pre-probationer for one full year.** Then he goes through a probationary period for a minimum of eight years. Only then is he eligible to request that he be a full monastic swami. So this type of taking in, sifting and observing would perhaps obviate many of these lapses and aberrations. You only allow a person to undertake that vow after a certain period in the spiritual life. However, even when all the conditions I have mentioned are fulfilled, extreme caution must be exercised until a stage is reached where brahmacharya is one's normal and natural condition.
12. **if the mind is diverted into higher things, automatically brahmacharya becomes easy.** You can succeed in brahmacharya if the mind is totally taken up by something so wonderful, so big, it absorbs you and elevates you, and the mind is simply gripped by it. When you want an infinitely higher enjoyment, then you say: "My discarding this is not any discarding. My discarding the smaller enjoyments of the physical aspect of my being is not at all any renunciation to boast about." On the contrary, you are being shrewd and wise because you want to go after something infinitely more wonderful. It is like throwing away pieces of glass if someone says,

"I'll replace them with diamonds." That is another way of looking at the whole phenomenon of celibacy from the point of view of the spiritual life and the highest attainment of illumination and enlightenment.

Quotes by Dadasri (an enlightened sage from Gujarat)

1. The presence of brahmacharya in the mind, the body and the speech results in wonderful power of mind, wonderful power of body and wonderful power of the speech.
2. **If ever there is an occasion for a severe testing of your resolve of brahmacharya, if there is strong sexual attraction and inclination, then one should fast two to three times. When the force of unfolding karma is very strong, fasting can stop them. Fasting does not destroy these sexual passions completely**
3. After attaining the bliss of the Self , the pleasures of sex become and redundant, just as a cup of tea looses its sweetness after having had a sweet dessert. The higher the order of bliss the less appealing the routine of the physical aspects of sexual pleasures. The enjoyment of food is not prohibited. There is no good to be attained in the enjoyment of sexual impulses. Know that it is merely an aspect of imaginations.

Quotes from Spiritual Scriptures

1. **The Chandogya Upanishad** says, "Only those who (observe) brahmacharya will attain to Brahman (Supreme Reality). For them there is freedom to act as they wish in all the worlds.Now, what people call yajna (sacrifice), that is really brahmacharya. What people call worship (Ishta), that is really brahmacharya. What people call Vedic sacrifice, that is really brahmacharya. For only through brahmacharya does one understand the Atman (the Self). (8.4.3, 8.5.1-2)
2. **The Prasnopnishad** stresses the same point. When six highly evolved aspirants approach sage Pippalada seeking the Highest Brahman, the Rishi tells them, "Stay here another year observing austerity, brahmacharya and faith. Then you may ask questions as you please and, if I know, I will surely explain all to you." (1.2)
3. **Srimad Bhagavatam** has this to say, "The highest form of tapas (austerity) is the abstinence from sexuality and not in the performance of body-torturing rites. Heroism lies in the conquest of one's sensual, lustful nature and not in mere combativeness. And Truth is seeing God in everything and not mere factual speech." (1.11.18.43)
4. **In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna** exhorts spiritual aspirants to be "fearless, serene, restrained in mind and established in the vow of continence" and meditate on Him to reach the goal. (6.14). He says that a person aspiring to enter the "Imperishable Principle" should lead a life of continence and asceticism. Such a person is assured of liberation at thetime of death. (8.11-12).**Sri Krishna** also warns about the pitfalls of progressive degeneration if one does not control lust and anger. "It is lust, it is anger, born of Rajoguna, insatiable and prompting man to great sin. Know this to be the enemy in man's spiritual life. .Knowledge is overcast by this eternal foe of the aspirant after knowledge. Therefore, controlling the senses at the beginning itself, slay this foul enemy, the destroyer of all knowledge and realization." (3.37-41)
5. **Swami Yatiswarananda**, a former Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Order, says, "In the higher forms of Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, great stress has been laid on the observance of perfect brahmacharya in thought, word and deed. You find it in the **'Sermon on the Mount'**, in the **'Vinaya Pitaka'** of Buddhism and in the Upanishads, in the Gita and in the Bhagavatam. A

socially accepted form of moral life alone is not enough for a spiritual aspirant. He must attain perfection in moral virtues, especially brahmacharya.

6. Know that in this world there is nothing that cannot be attained by one who remains from birth to death a perfect celibate… In one person, knowledge of the four Vedas, and in another, perfect celibacy – of these, the latter is superior to the former who is wanting in celibacy. **- The Mahabharata**
7. And those students who find that world of God through chastity, theirs is that heavenly country; theirs, in whatever world they are, is freedom. **- Chhandogya Upanishad**
8. Sensuality destroys life, lustre, strength, vitality, memory, wealth, great fame, holiness and devotion to the Supreme – **Gita**
9. It is only traveling on the waves of celibacy that one reaches the level of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The awakening of Kundalini can only happen if we have celibacy under absolute control. The awakening of the is beset with practicing absolute celibacy for a continuous period of 12 years. Mahavira practiced celibacy for a continuous period of 12 years. Gautama Buddha followed and absolute celibacy was also practiced by Jesus Christ for reaching the status they finally achieved in life… becoming an enlightened one! The practice of absolute celibacy directly leads towards gaining enlightenment within this life. Brahmacharya Vrata does not mean sexual inactivity. It must be practiced mentally to gain purity of thought so that absolute control over the five senses and the mind can be established with shall lead one towards attaining the stage of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.
10. The Yoga-Sutra packs many things into each of its verses, but reserves a separate verse for celibacy. Then the scripture goes on to refer to celibacy again in other verses. THE GREAT AUSTERITY Celibacy is actually one of the major austerities. The Yoga-Sutra lists “austerities” (tapas) among the three basic actions of yoga. (The other two activities of yoga are “Self-Study” and “Devotion to the Lord.”) Austerities are given first place in the Sutra. So one truly interested in yoga and God-knowledge will be very interested in austerities. The only other austerity that is on a par with celibacy is meditation itself. >Effective traditional austerities include celibacy, fasting, solitude, silence, pranayama, holding an asana, and meditation itself. Another austerity that needs to be mentioned today: Restraining yourself from playing “fashion saddhu” and dressing yourself up in religious garb to get attention and notoriety. That would be a worthwhile austerity for some. But among all austerities, sexual continence is arguably the most important. It inaugurates profound changes in the physical and astral bodies of the aspiring yogi. Chastity dramatically improves his concentration and meditation. It founds the storehouse of his merit and accumulates shakti, sometimes called “ojas.”
11. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika, a key fourteenth-century text, says those who practice brahmacharya need no longer fear death.
12. In the Mahabharata again, you will find, in the Santi Parva: “Many are the branches of Dharma, but Dama is the basis of them all’.

Quotes by Sri Sri Ravishankar (the founder of “The Art of Living” organization)

Ref: http://riteshjgd.tripod.com/GuruGanga.html

1. How to sublimate lust into love?

Lust is one of the main botherations that many face. Lust grips the mind and tires the body, and dulls the intellect. Lust when indulged brings inertia, and when suppressed brings anger. Lust is nothing but primordial un-harnessed energy. The same when harnessed manifests as enthusiasm, sparkle, sharpness of intellect and love. What are the factors which can sublimate or transform lust into love?

1. **Playfulness :** People who are in the grip of lust cannot be genuinely playful. When you are genuinely playful, then there is not lust there.
2. **Generosity :** When you realize that you are here only to give and give, and you feel that you are very generous, lust is sublimated. Lust makes one possessive and not generous.
3. **Moderate to less intake of food**
4. **Remembrance of death**
5. **Divine Romance**
6. **Cold water baths**
7. **Undertaking creative challenges**

2. LOVE AND LUST

Doubt cannot come where there is a sense of closeness. Doubt needs a distance to appear. You never doubt something that is dear to you, close to you.

In love even an object gains life. Stones speak to you, trees speak to you, the sun, the moon and the whole creation becomes alive, Divine. In lust even a living being becomes a mere object. You want to use even people like objects. Here are some salient attributes of love and lust. They are so different yet so close!

3. Lust and anger

If someone's lust is interrupted they get angry and start hating. Hatred in the world today is not out of love, it is out of lust. Love is playfulness and in lust there is cunningness and manipulation. Shiva, the embodiment of innocence and love was meditating. His meditation was disturbed by an arrow of flowers from the lord of lust. As soon as Shiva woke up he opened his third eye and the lord of lust, Manmatha (one who churns the mind) was reduced to ashes. Everybody celebrated by throwing colors on each other realising that life is full of colours.

We play many roles in our life. If all the roles get mixed up it becomes dark, like when you mix all the colours. The wise play each role distinctively side by side, like colors displayed side by side form a rainbow.

4. The whole world is made up of love

The whole world is made up of love and everyone is made up of love. All is God. All is love. But then what is the purpose? Where is life heading? Life is heading towards perfection. Why? Is it not already perfect? No! Because love has six distortions – anger, lust, greed, jealousy, arrogance and delusion.

In animals, these six distortions are also present. However, they have no way to go beyond these distortions because nature rules them. But human beings are endowed with discrimination. This is the purpose of all *sadhana*, meditation and practices. Moving away from the distortion of creation to purity or back to the source. Usually we go from one imperfection to another imperfection. For example, if someone is greedy, you are angry about their greediness. Well, that person is greedy, but you are not less than them. You are not bringing the purity in you, but changing the flavor of impurity. Change of distortion does not bring perfection. Normally everyone does this, they just change the distortions, lust becomes anger, anger becomes jealousy, greed, arrogance or delusion.

Anger is no better than lust, it's worse than lust. Jealousy is worse than anger. That is why it is called *'Vikara'. Vikara* means distortions. The whole creation is made up of nature, and distortion of nature – *Prakriti and Vikriti*. Anger is not our nature; it is distortion of our nature. Jealousy is not our nature; it is distortion of our nature. You know why anger, greed, jealousy, lust, etc are impure? It is because they do not allow the Self to shine through.

Sin is that which does not bring the spirit inside to shine forth fully. Sin is not your nature; you are not born out of sin. Sin is like wrinkles in the cloth, it needs proper ironing. You know why lust is a sin? Because in lust you do not consider the other person as life, you do not honor the life, instead you use them like an object. You make them an object of your enjoyment so you are somewhere over-shadowing or not looking at the Self in the other person.

This is the only reason why lust is sinful. Love is the reverse of it. In love there is surrender, you see the other person as Divine. You elevate the matter into the level of spirit. For example, you worship an idol – a stone, it is matter. When you are worshipping the idol, it becomes a living reality. You are giving life to it. You elevate it to the level of God. This is moving towards perfection.

Anger is a sin because when you are angry you have lost the centeredness, you have lost the sight of the Self. Again, your focus is not on the Divine, infinite. You have made things small as objects again. So anger is a sin. Jealousy is a sin. Guilt is a sin. Why? In guilt you are not recognizing the Self as the only doer in the world. You are limiting the small mind to an action which has happened, or which has happened through somebody.

5. Playing your part.

Be thankful for the qualities you have been bestowed upon as they are not your own making. In the same way, it depends on the part that you have been given to play. Say, in a drama, you are given the part of a villain, and you play that role perfectly. A villain always knows that when I am playing the role of a villain, it's just a role I am playing. I'm very sincere to my role.

There is a saying in Sanskrit, *Durjanam Prathamam Vande Sajjanam Tadanantaram*. First, worship the bad person, and then the good man. The bad man is falling and giving you an example, "don't do what I did." Do not hate a criminal in jail, because he's a criminal. In prison, if there is a criminal, he is an embodiment of God. He has done you a greater service. Don't ever hate a drug addict, because he has given you such a beautiful lesson, and he has been given that role. He is just performing his role that way.

When you understand these basic laws of truth, then your inner perfection becomes so stable that nothing on this planet can shake your inner perfection. Nothing can shake you. Your knowledge of a mistake comes to you when you are innocent! The knowledge of a mistake dawns in the moment when you are 'out of the mistake'.

However the past has been, whatever mistake has happened, do not consider yourself to be a sinner or the maker of that mistake. In the present moment you are new again, pure and clear.

Mistakes of the past are past. When this knowledge comes, that moment you are again perfect. Often, mothers scold their children and afterwards feel so guilty. Then they go on regretting, "Oh, poor thing. I

got so angry and annoyed at this kid, poor child! I should not have done this." Then you prepare yourself to get angry again. Okay, you got angry with your kid once or twice. Why? Because of lack of awareness! Awareness was missing so the anger came up, it happened.

That's what Krishna tells Arjuna, "Arjunaa, you think you are not going to do what you are supposed to do? I tell you, you will do it. Even if you don't want, you are going to do it!" In a very clever way He puts it: "You better surrender to me directly."

He says: "Drop everything. Surrender to Me, and do what I say". Then He says: "Well, I have told you whatever I have to say, now you think it over and do what you like, you do whatever you want to do, do however you like". But then He said, "but remember, you will do only what I want".

These last few sentences of Krishna were so confusing, and people have struggled to make sense out of them. There are thousands of commentaries trying to make sense out of these few words, three contradicting statements. First He says, Surrender everything, I'll do everything for you, or just do as I say. Then he says: Think, think and see what is right for you, do whatever you feel is right. And then in the third statement he says: But remember (anyway) you will do only what I want you to do.

All of our wanting to do, 'doership', is there to eliminate the *tamas* or inertia in you. Once inertia is eliminated, then you are in activity. When you are acting, you become a witness to the acting. Then you know you are not doing. Things are happening through you. This is the final level of realization. You can see this in every action of yours. Have you noticed this? You are busy 'doing' when you accomplish something. In the beginning you think, "Oh! I have accomplished." But your accomplishment becomes more and more and more and as time goes by, you will begin to feel, "no, it's all happening. I did not do anything, I did not accomplish."

A writer will feel, "I did not write, it just started flowing, it started happening." All the creative work in the world – whether painting, dance, drama, music, anything – has all come from that unknown corner. It just spontaneously started happening. You are not the doer. The best sculptor will say, "I didn't do it, it just started happening." The best painter will say the same thing; the best music composer would say the same thing.

I tell you, the same is true for criminals too. You ask the worst criminal, "did you do this?" He will reply, "No, it happened! What could I do?" *Knowledge of the Self is the only thing that can take you from imperfection to perfection.*

Quotes by Mahatma Gandhi

1. *Those who want to perform national service, or to have a gleam of the real religious life, must lead a celibate life, whether married or unmarried.*
2. Life without Brahmacharya appears to me to be insipid and animal-like. The brute by nature knows to self-restraint. Man is man because he is capable of, and only in so far as he exercises, self-restraint. What chiefly distinguishes man from the beast is that man from his age of discretion begins to practice a life of continual self-restraint. God has enabled man to distinguish between his sister, his, mother, his daughter and his wife. What formerly appeared to me to be extravagant praise of Brahmacharya in our religious books seems now, with increasing clearness every day, to be absolutely proper and founded on experience. I hold that a life of perfect

continence in thought, speech and action is necessary for reaching spiritual perfection. And a nation that does not possess such men is poorer for the want. Brahmacharya is impossible without complete control of all senses. My own experiment shows that occasional fasting is very helpful in subduing animal passions.

3. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in his autobiography that when he was about 34 years old, he heard the Inner Voice saying that the observance of total celibacy was indispensable for further spiritual progress. Gandhiji was already doing selfless service, observing, *mouna* on Sundays, daily praying, reading *Bhagavad Gita* and sticking to *yama* and *niyama*: *satyam, ahimsa, brahmacharya* etc. All that was already there. But now he was convinced: "further progress is not possible unless I have TOTAL *brahmacharya*."Gandhiji consulted his wife Kasturba, who agreed with his proposal. He was 34 or 35 years old and from that age until 79, for more than 40 years, he observed strict *brahmacharya*. **This observance is the reason that his achievement is so great.**
4. Gandhi said fathering and supporting children robbed him of precious energy during a time when he wanted to devote himself more completely to public service. However, over a period of many celibate years-admittedly struggling with the practice and even breaking his vow on several occasions-Gandhi discovered that the benefits of brahmacharya far exceeded birth control. **His home life became more "peaceful, sweet, and happy," he developed a new measure of self-restraint, and he found increasing reserves of time and energy to devote to humanitarian and spiritual pursuits. "I realized that a vow, far from closing the door to real freedom, opened it**," he wrote in his autobiography. "What formerly appeared to me to be extravagant praise of brahmacharya in our religious books seems now, with increasing clearness every day, to be absolutely proper and founded on experience."
5. By **Swami Sivananda** (founder of Divine Life Society, Rishikesh): Look at Mahatma Gandhi! He had acquired this power by constant and careful practice of Ahimsa, Satyam and Brahmacharya—non-violence, truth and celibacy. He influenced the world through this power alone. Through Brahmacharya and Brahmacharya alone can you get physical, mental and spiritual advancement in life.
6. From that day when I began brahmacharya, our freedom began. My wife became a free woman, free from my authority as her lord and master, and I became free from the slavery to my own appetite, which she had to satisfy. No other woman had any attraction for me in the same sense that my wife had. I was too loyal to her as husband and too loyal to the vow I had taken before my mother to be slave to any other woman. But the manner in which my brahmacharya came to me irresistibly drew me to woman as the mother of man. She became too sacred for sexual love. And so every woman at once became sister or daughter to me.
7. **NECESSITY OF CONTINENCE** *(ref: http://www.rkvenkat.org/chastity.html* - GUIDE TO HEALTH, Part 1, Ch 9.) **Many are the keys to health, and they are all quite essential; but one thing needful, above all others is brahmacharya. Pure air, pure water, and wholesome food certainly contribute to health. But how can we be healthy if we expend all the health that we acquire? How can we help being paupers if we spend all the money that we earn?** There can be no doubt that men and women can never be virile or strong unless they observe true brahmacharya.What, then, is brahmacharya? It means that men and women should refrain from carnal knowledge of each other. That is to say, they should not touch each other with a carnal thought, they should not think of it even in their dreams. Their mutual glances should be free from all suggestion of carnality. The hidden strength that God has given us should be conserved by rigid self-discipline, and transmitted into energy and power–not merely of body, but also of mind and soul.

8. *Meshes of Sensuality*. But what is the spectacle that we actually see around us? Men and women, old and young, are caught in the meshes of sensuality. Blinded for the most part by lust, they lose all sense of right and wrong. I have myself seen even boys and girls behaving as if they were mad under its fatal influence. **For the sake of a momentary pleasure, we sacrifice in an instant all the stock of vital energy that we have laboriously accumulated. The infatuation over, we find ourselves in a miserable condition. The next morning we feel hopelessly weak and tired, and the mind refuses to do its work. So the days pass and years, until at length old age comes upon us, and find us utterly emasculated in body and in mind.**
9. *The Law of Nature*. But the law of nature is just the reverse of this. The older we grow, the keener should our intellect be; the longer we live, the greater should be our capacity to communicate the benefit of our accumulated experience to our fellow-men. And such is indeed the case with those who have been true brahmachâris. They have no fear of death, and they do not forget God even in the hour of death; nor do they indulge in vain desires. They die with a smile on their lips, and boldly face the day of judgment. They are true men and women; and of them alone can it be said that they have conserved their health.
10. We hardly realize the fact that **incontinence is the root-cause of most of the vanity, anger, fear, and jealousy in the world. If our mind is not under our control, if we behave once or oftener every day more foolishly than even little children, what sins may we not commit consciously or unconsciously? How can we pause to think of the consequences of our actions, however vile or sinful they may be?**
11. *True Brahmachâris.* But you may ask: "Who has ever seen a true brahmachâri in this sense?" …The race of true brahmachâris is by no means extinct; but if they were commonly to be met with, of what value would brahmacharya be? **Thousands of hardy laborers have to go and dig deep into the bowels of the earth in search of diamonds, and at length they get perhaps merely a handful of them out of heaps and heaps of rock. How much greater, then, should be the labor involved in the discovery of the infinitely more precious diamond of a brahmachâri?**
12. ***What about the Married?*** We have already seen what is the highest state for us to attain. We should keep this ideal constantly before us, and try to approach it to the utmost of our capacity. **When little children are taught to write the letters of the alphabet, we show them the perfect shapes of the letters, and they try to reproduce them as best they can. In the same way, if we steadily work up to the ideal of brahmacharya, we may ultimately succeed in realizing it.**
13. *Fatal Merry-Making.* Married people should understand the true function of marriage, and should not violate brahmacharya except with a view to progeny.
14. *Sensuality – A Poison.* But this is so difficult under our present conditions of life. Our diet, our ways of life, our common talk, and our environments are all equally calculated to rouse animal passions; and sensuality is like a poison eating into our vitals. Some people may doubt the possibility of our being able to free ourselves from this bondage. This is written not for those who go about with such doubting of heart, but only for those who are really in earnest, and who have the courage to take active steps for self-improvement. Those who are quite content with their present abject condition will find this tedious even to read; but I hope it will be of some service to those who have realized and are disgusted with their own miserable plight.
15. ***Advice to the Unmarried.*** **From all that has been said, it follows that those who are still unmarried should try to remain so; but if they cannot help marrying, they should defer it as long as possible.**
16. *Sexual Enjoyment.* I can affirm, without the slightest hesitation, from my own experience as well as that of others, that sexual enjoyment is not only not necessary for, but is positively injurious to health. **All the strength of body and mind that has taken long to acquire is lost all at once by a single dissipation of the vital energy. It takes a long time to regain this lost vitality, and even**

then there is no saying that it can be thoroughly recovered. A broken mirror may be mended and made to do its work, but it can never be anything but a broken mirror.

17. *Health and Morals.* As has already been pointed out, the preservation of our vitality is impossible without pure air, pure water, pure and wholesome food, as well as pure thoughts. **So vital indeed is the relation between health and morals, that we can never be perfectly healthy unless we lead a clean life.** The earnest man, who forgetting the errors of the past, begins to live a life of purity, will be able to reap the fruit of it straightaway. **Those who practice true brahmacharya, even for a short period, will see how their body and mind improve steadily in strength and power, and they will not, at any cost, be willing to part with this treasure.**
18. *How Married People can Observe Brahmacharya*. It is not enough to observe the laws of health as regards air, water and food… They should be constantly engaged in good work during the day. They should read such books as fill them with noble thoughts and meditate over the lives of great men, and live in the constant realization of the fact that sexual enjoyment is the root of much misery. Whenever they feel a craving for sexual indulgence, they should bathe in cold water, so that the heat of passion may be cooled down, and be refined into the energy of virtuous activity. This is a difficult thing to do, but we have been born to wrestle with difficulties and conquer them; and he who has not the will to do so can never enjoy the supreme blessing of true health.
19. **MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH** (ref: http://www.rkvenkat.org/chastity.html) – VOW OF BRAHMACARYA (CH. 3.8) The great potentiality of brahmacharya daily became more and more patent to me.A perfect observance of brahmacharya means realization of Brahman… Every day of the vow has taken me nearer the knowledge that in brahmacharya lies the protection of the body, the mind, and the soul. For brahmacharya was now no process of hard penance; it was a matter of consolation and joy. **Every day revealed a fresh beauty in it.** But if it was a matter of ever-increasing joy, let no one believe that it was an easy thing for me. **Every day I realize more and more that it is like walking on the sword's edge, and I see every moment the necessity for eternal vigilance.**
20. *Necessity of Restraints.* Brahmacharya means control of the senses in thought, word, and deed. There is no limit to the possibilities of renunciation, even as there is none to those of brahmacharya. Such brahmacharya is impossible of attainment by limited effort. For many, it must remain only as an ideal. An aspirant after brahmacharya will always be conscious of his shortcomings, will seek out the passions lingering in the innermost recesses of his heart and will incessantly strive to get rid of them. So long as thought is not under complete control of the will, brahmacharya in its fulness is absent… Let no one think that it is impossible because it is difficult. **It is the highest goal, and it is no wonder that the highest effort should be necessary to attain it.**
21. TO THE ASPIRANTS AFTER BRAHMACARYA (p. 402) I must utter a warning for the aspirants after brahmacharya. Though I have made out an intimate connection between diet and brahmacharya, it is certain that mind is the principle thing. A mind consciously unclean cannot be cleansed by fasting. Modifications in diet have no effect on it. The concupiscence of the mind cannot be rooted out except by intense self-examination, surrender to God, and lastly, grace. But there is an intimate connection between the mind and the body, and the carnal mind always lusts for delicaccies and luxuries. To obviate this tendency, dietetic restrictions and fasting would appear to be necessary. The carnal mind, instead of controlling the senses, becomes their slave, and therefore, the body always needs clean, non-stimulating foods and periodical fasting. Those who make light of dietetic restrictions and fasting are as much in error as those who stake their all on them. My experience teaches me that, for those whose minds are working towards

self-restraint, dietetic restrictions and fasting are very helpful. In fact, without their help, concupiscence cannot be completely rooted out of the mind.

22. FROM YERAVADA MANDIR (ref: http://www.rkvenkat.org/chastity.html) CHAPTER 3. **BRAHMACHARYA OR CHASTITY**The man who is wedded to Truth and worships Truth alone, proves unfaithful to her if he applies his talents to anything else. How then can he minister to the senses? **A man whose activities are wholly consecrated to the realization of Truth, which requires utter selflessness, can have no time for the selfish purpose of begetting children and running a household.** Realization of Truth through self-gratification should appear a contradiction in terms.If we look at it from the standpoint of ahimsâ (non-violence), we find that the fulfillment of ahimsâ is impossible without utter selflessness. **Ahimsâ means Universal Love. If a man gives his love to one woman, or a woman to one man, what is there left for all the world besides? It simply means: "We two first, and the devil take all the rest of them." As a faithful wife must be prepared to sacrifice her all for the sake of her husband, and a faithful husband for the sake of his wife, it is clear that such persons cannot rise to the height of Universal Love, or look upon all mankind as kith and kin.** For, they have created a boundary wall round their love. The larger their family, the farther are they from Universal Love. Hence, one who would obey the Law of ahimsâ cannot marry, not to speak of gratification outside the marital bond. The very thought that all the women in the world are his sisters, mothers, or daughters, will at once ennoble a man and snap his chains… If the foregoing argument is appreciated, a consideration of the physical benefits of chastity becomes a matter of secondary importance. How foolish it is intentionally to dissipate vital energy in sensual enjoyment! **It is a grave misuse to fritter away for physical gratification that which is given to man and woman for the full development of their bodily and mental powers. Such misuse is the root cause of many a disease.**
23. Brahmacharya, like all other observances, must be observed in thought, word and deed. We are told in the Gita, and experience will corroborate the statement, that the foolish man, who appears to control his body, but is nursing evil thoughts in his mind, makes a vain effort. It may be harmful to suppress the body, if the mind is at the same time allowed to go astray. Where the mind wanders, the body must follow sooner or later.It is necessary here to appreciate a distinction. **It is one thing to allow the mind to harbour impure thoughts; it is a different thing altogether if it strays among them in spite of ourselves. Victory will be ours in the end, if we non-cooperate with the mind in its evil wanderings.**
24. We experience every moment of our lives, that often while the body is subject to our control, the mind is not. This physical control should never be relaxed, and in addition we must put forth a constant endeavour to bring the mind under control. We can do nothing more, nothing less. If we give way to the mind, the body and the mind will pull different ways, and we shall be false to ourselves. Body and mind may be said to go together, so long as we continue to resist the approach of every evil thought.
25. The observence of brahmacharya has been believed to be very difficult, almost impossible. In trying to find a reason for this belief, we see that the term brahmacharya has been taken in a narrow sense. Mere control of animal passion has been thought to be tantamount to observing brahmacharya. I feel, that this conception is incomplete and wrong. Brahmacharya means control of all the organs of sense. He who attempts to control only one organ, and allows all the others free play, is bound to find his effort futile. **To hear suggestive stories with the ears, to see suggestive sights with the eyes, to taste simulating food with the tongue, to touch exciting things with the hands, and then at the same time to expect to control the only remaining organ is like putting one's hands in the fire, and expecting to escape being burnt.** He therefore who is resolved to control the one must be likewise determined to control the rest. I have

always felt, that much harm has been done by the narrow definition of brahmacharya. If we practise simultaneous self-control in all directions, the attempt will be scientific and possible of success. Perhaps the palate is the chief sinner. That is why in the Ashram we have assigned to control of the palate a separate place among our observances. Let us remember the root meaning of brahmacharya. Charya means course of conduct; brahmacharya conduct adapted to the search of Brahma, i.e., Truth. From this etymological meaning arises the special meaning, viz. control of all the senses. We must entirely forget the incomplete definition which restricts itself to the sexual aspect only.

26. CHAPTER 4. CONTROL OF THE PALATE Control of the palate is very closely connected with the observance of brahmacharya. I have found from experience that the observance of celibacy becomes comparatively easy, if one acquires mastery over the palate. **Food has to be taken as we take medicine, that is, without thinking whether it is palatable or otherwise, and only in quantities limited to the needs of the body. Just as medicine taken in too small a dose does not take effect or the full effect, and as too large a dose injures the system, so it is with food. It is therefore a breach of their observance to take anything for its pleasant taste. It is equally a breach to take too much of what one finds to one's taste. The body is injured every time that one over-eats, and the injury can be partially repaired only by fasting.** We must not be thinking of food all the twenty-four hours of the day. The only thing needful is perpetual vigilance, which will help us to find out very soon when we eat for self-indulgence, and when in order only to sustain the body. This being discovered, we must resolutely set our faces against mere indulgence.
27. **SELF-RESTRAINT V. SELF-INDULGENCE** (ref: http://www.rkvenkat.org/chastity.html) DUTY OF CHASTITY (P. 36) We exaggerate the difficulty of chastity and voluntary poverty and impute extraordinary merit to them, reserve them for mahâthmas and yogis and rule the latter out of ordinary life, forgetting that real mâhâthmas and yogis are unthinkable in a society where the ordinary level is brought down to the mud-bank. On the principle, that evil like the hare travels faster than good which like the tortoise though steady goes slow, voluptuousness of the West comes to us with lightning speed, and with all its variegated enchantment dazzles and blinds us to the realities of life. We are almost ashamed of chastity, and are in danger of looking upon self-imposed poverty as a crime in the face of the Western splendor that descends upon us from minute to minute through the cable, and day to day through the steamers that discharge their cargo on our shores… We often prate about spirituality as if it had nothing to do with the ordinary affairs of life, and had been reserved for anchorites lost in the Himalayan forests or concealed in some inaccessible Himalayan cave. Spirituality that has no bearing on and produces no effect on everyday life is 'an airy nothing.' Let young men and women know that it is their duty, if they would purify the atmosphere about them and shed their weakness, to be and remain chaste and know, too, that it is not so difficult as they have been taught to imagine.
28. In Confidence, *Young India*, 13 Oct 1920. The word in Sanskrit corresponding to celibacy is brahmacharya, and the latter means much more than celibacy. Brahmacharya means perfect control over all the senses and organs. **For the perfect brahmachâri nothing is impossible. But it is an ideal state which is rarely realized. It is almost like Euclid's line which exists only in imagination, never capable of being physically drawn. It is nevertheless an important definition in geometry yielding great result. So may a perfect brahmachâri exist only in imagination. But if we did not keep him constantly before our mind's eye, we should be like a rudderless ship. The nearer the approach to the imaginary state, the greater the perfection.**I hold that a life of perfect continence in thought, speech, and action is necessary for reaching spiritual perfection. And the nation that does not possess such men is the poorer for the want.

29. ***Advice to Parents.***Parents furnish an object lesson which the children easily grasp. By reckless indulgence in their passions, they serve for their children as models of unrestrained license… I have not a shadow of doubt that married people, if they wished well to the country and wanted to see India become a nation of strong and handsome full-formed men and women, would practice perfect self-restraint.
30. ***To the Newly-Married.*** I tender this advice even to the newly married. It is easier not to do a thing at all than to cease doing it, even as it is easier for a life abstainer to remain teetotaler than for a drunkard or even a temperate man to abstain. To remain erect is infinitely easier than to rise from a fall. It is wrong to say that continence can be safely preached only to the satiated. There is hardly any meaning, either, in preaching continence to an enfeebled person. **May I point out to parents that they ought not to fall into the argumentative trap of the rights of partners? Consent is required for indulgence, never for restraint; this is an obvious truth.**
31. ***Rules for Brahmacharya.*** I place before the readers a few simple rules which are based on the experience not only of myself, but of many of my associates:
    1. Boys and girls should be brought up simply and naturally in the full belief that they are and can remain innocent.
    2. All should abstain from heating and stimulating foods, condiments such as chillies, fatty, and concentrated food such as fritters, sweets and fried substances.
    3. **Husband and wife should occupy separate rooms and avoid privacy.**
    4. **Both body and mind should be constantly and healthily occupied.**
    5. **Early to bed and early to rise should be strictly observed.**
    6. **All unclean literature should be avoided. The antidote for unclean thoughts is clean thoughts.**
    7. **Theatres, cinemas, etc., which tend to stimulate passion should be shunned.**
    8. Nocturnal dreams need not cause any anxiety. A cold bath every time for a fairly strong person is the finest preventive in such cases. It is wrong to say that an occasional indulgence is a safeguard against involuntary dreams.
    9. Above all, one must not consider continence even as between husband and wife to be so difficult as to be practically impossible. On the contrary, self-restraint must be considered to be the ordinary and natural practice of life.
    10. A heartfelt prayer every day for purity makes one progressively pure.
32. What is Brahmacharya? *(Young India*, 5 Jun 1924) A friend asks: "What is brahmacharya? Is it possible to practice it to perfection? If possible, do you do so?" The full and proper meaning of brahmacharya is search of Brahman. Brahman pervades everything and can, therefore, be searched by diving into and realizing the inner self. This realization is impossible without complete control of the senses. Brahmacharya thus means control in thought, word, and action, of all the senses at all times and in all places. A man or woman completely practicing brahmacharya is absolutely free from passion. Such a one, therefore, lives nigh unto God, is God-like.
33. *My Strivings after Brahmacharya*. I have no doubt that it is possible to practice such brahmacharya in thought, word, and action to the fullest extent.
34. *Healthy Soul in Healthy Body*. I believe that a healthy soul should inhabit a healthy body. To the extent, therefore, that the soul grows into health and freedom from passion, to that extent the body also grows into that state.
35. *Ordinary Meaning of Brahmacharya*. The ordinary accepted sense of brahmacharya is the control in thought, word, and action of animal passion… It has been thought to be very difficult to practice this brahmacharya. This control of the carnal desire has been so very difficult, has become nearly impossible, because equal stress has not been laid on the control of the palate. It

is also the experience of our physicians that a body enfeebled by disease is always a favorite abode of carnal desire, and brahmacharya by an enfeebled race is difficult to practice naturally.

36. *Physical Culture.* One, who would practice complete control of all the senses, must needs welcome the waning of the flesh. With the extinction of attachment to the flesh, comes the extinction of the desire to have muscular strength. But the body of a true brahmachâri is bound to be exceptionally fresh and wiry. This brahmacharya is something unearthly. He who is not swayed by carnal desire even in his sleep, is worthy of all adoration. The control of every other sense shall be 'added unto' him.
37. *How to Eradicate Evil Thoughts?* So long as the mind is engaged in a perpetual struggle against evil thoughts, there is no reason to despair. When the eye offends, it should be closed. When the ears offend, they should be stopped. It is best always to walk with down-cast eyes. They will have no occasion to go astray. All haunts of filthy talk or unclean music should be avoided. There should be full control of the palate. One of the rules for control of the palate is to abjure completely or, as much as possible, all condiments. A more difficult rule is to cultivate the feeling that the food we eat is to sustain the body, never to satisfy the palate. There is, however, a golden rule for gaining control of the carnal desire. It is the repetition of the divine word Rama or such other Mantra. Whichever Mantra is selected, one should be identified with it whilst repeating it.
38. IN ITS WIDER MEANING. *(Navjivan*, 26 Feb 1925) Brahmacharya appears to be difficult because we do not control the other senses. **Take for example organ of taste which leads the rest. Zoologists tell us that brahmacharya is observed by the lower animals, as for instance cattle, to a greater extent than by human beings, and this is a fact. The reason is that cattle have perfect control over the palate, not by will but by instinct. They subsist on mere fodder, and of this, too, they take a quantity just sufficient for nutrition. They eat to live, do not live to eat; while our case is just the reverse… The taste depends upon hunger. Even sweets will not be as tasteful to one who is not hungry, as a slice of dry bread is to another who is really so. We prepare food in various ways with a variety of spices in order to be able to load the stomach, and wonder when we find brahmacharya difficult to observe.**
39. ***Use and Misuse of Eyes.*** We misuse and corrupt the eyes which God has given us, and do not direct them to the right things.
40. *Use and Misuse of Clothes.* Clothes are meant just to cover the body, protect it against heat and cold, not to beautify it. If a child is trembling with cold, we must send him to the fireside to warm himself or out into the street for a run, or into the field for work. It is only thus that we can help him to build a splendid constitution. By keeping the child confined in the house, we impart a false warmth to his body. By pampering his body, we only succeed in destroying it.
41. *Obstacles in the Way of Brahmacharya*. So much for the clothes. Then again, the light conversation carried on in the house creates a very harmful impression on the child's mind. The things which he sees around him also tend to corrupt him. The wonder is that we have not sunk to the lowest depths of barbarism. Restraint is observed in spite of conditions which render it well-nigh impossible. A gracious Providence has so arranged things that man is saved in spite of himself. If we remove all these obstacles in the way of brahmacharya, it not only becomes possible but also easy to observe.
42. *Touching a Woman.* Brahmacharya does not mean that one may not touch a woman, even one's sister, in any circumstances whatsoever. But it does mean that one's state of mind should be as calm and unruffled during such contact as when one touches, say, a piece of paper. A man's brahmacharya avails for nothing if he must hesitate in nursing his sister who is ill. **He has to be as free from excitement in case of contact with the fairest damsel on earth, as in contact with a dead body.**

43. TRUE CELIBACY. (*Young India*, 25 Jun 1925) A man who consciously sins with his mind, even though he may not sin with his body, is not a celibate. One who cannot remain unmoved at the sight of a woman, however beautiful she may be, is not a celibate. One who keeps his body under control from sheer necessity, does well, but is not a celibate. We may not degrade sacred words by a loose use of them. True celibacy has important results which can be verified. It is a difficult virtue to practice. Many attempt it, but few succeed.
44. *Plea for Humility*. **It must be taken for granted that those who cultivate truth, ahimsa, brahmacharya, must be humble. Truth without humility would be an arrogant caricature. He who wants to practice truth knows how hard it is. The world may applaud his so-called triumphs. Little does the world know his falls. A truthful man is a chastened being. He has need to be humble. A man who wants to love the whole world including one who calls himself his enemy, knows how impossible it is to do so in his own strength. He must be as mere dust before he can understand the elements of ahimsa. He is nothing if he does not daily grow in humility as he grows in love.**
45. *God Triumphs in Us, Never We*. A man who would have his eye single, who would regard every woman as his blood sister or mother, has to be less than dust. **He stands on the brink of a precipice. The slightest turn of the head brings him down. He dare not whisper his virtue to his very own. For, he knows not what the next moment has in store for him. For him, "pride goeth before destruction and haughtiness before a fall."** Well has the Gita said: **"Passions subside in a fasting man, not the desire for them. The desire goes only when man sees God face to face." And no one can see God face to face who has aught of the 'I' in him. He must become a cypher if he would see God. Who shall dare say in this storm-tossed universe: "I have won?" God triumphs in us, never we.**
46. *Ours is Merely to Make the Attempt*. Let us not lower the values of these virtues so that we may all be able to claim them. What is true of the physical world, is true of the spiritual. If, in order to gain a worldly battle, Europe sacrificed several million lives during the late War, itself a transitory event, what wonder that in the spiritual battle millions have to perish in the attempt so that one complete example may be left to the world. It is ours merely to make the attempt in the uttermost humility. The cultivation of these higher virtues is its own reward. He who cashes any of them loses his soul. Virtues are not to trade with. My Truth, my Ahimsa, my Brahmacharya are matters between myself and my Maker. They are not articles of trade. Any man who dares to trade with them will do so at his peril. **The world has no standard, no means wherewith to judge these things. They defy scrutiny and analysis. Let us, therefore, cultivate them for our own purification.**
47. ROYAL ROAD TO SELF-REALIZATION. *(Young India*, 1926) I am being inundated with letters on *brahmacharya* and means to its attainment. Let me repeat in different language what I have already said or written on previous occasions. *Brahmacharya* is not mere mechanical celibacy; it means complete control over all the senses and freedom from lust in thought, word, and deed. As such it is the royal road to self-realization or attainment of *Brahman*. **The ideal *brahmachâri* has not to struggle with sensual desire or desire for procreation; it never troubles him at all. The whole world will be to him one vast family; he will center all his ambition in relieving the misery of mankind and the desire for procreation will be to him as gall and wormwood. He who has realized the misery of mankind in all its magnitude will never be stirred by passion. He will instinctively know the fountain of strength in him, and he will ever persevere to keep it undefiled. His humble strength will command respect of the world, and he will wield an influence greater than that of the sceptered monarch.**
48. *Attraction Between Man and Woman.* But I am told that this is an impossible ideal, that I do not take count of the natural attraction between man and woman. I refuse to believe that the

sensual affinity referred to here can be at all regarded as natural; in that case the deluge would soon be over us. The natural affinity between man and woman is the attraction between brother and sister, mother and son, or father and daughter. It is that natural attraction that sustains the world. I should find it impossible to live, much less carry on my work, if I did not regard the whole of womankind as sisters, daughters, or mothers. If I looked at them with lustful eyes, it would be the surest way to perdition.

49. ***Procreation–A Natural Phenomenon***. **Procreation is a natural phenomenon indeed, but within specific limits. A transgression of those limits imperils womankind, emasculates the race, induces disease, puts a premium on vice, and makes the world ungodly. A man in the grip of the sensual desire is a man without moorings. If such a one were to guide society, to flood it with his writings and men were to be swayed by them, where would society be? And yet we have the very thing happening today.**
50. *Purpose of Marriage.* **Supposing a moth whirling round a light were to record the moments of its fleeting joy and we were to imitate it, regarding it as an exemplar, where would we be?** No, I must declare with all the power I can command that sensual attraction even between husband and wife is unnatural. Marriage is meant to cleanse the hearts of the couple of sordid passions and take them nearer to God. Lustless love between husband and wife is not impossible. **Man is not a brute. He has risen to a higher state after countless births in brute creation. He is born to stand, not to walk on all fours or crawl. Bestiality is as far removed from manhood, as matter from spirit.**
51. *Means of Attainment*. In conclusion I shall summarize the means to its attainment.
    1. **The first step is the realization of its necessity.**
    2. The next is gradual control of the senses. A *brahmachâri* must needs control his palate. He must eat to live, and not for enjoyment. He must see only clean things and close his eyes before anything unclean. It is thus a sign of polite breeding to walk with one's eyes towards the ground and not wandering about from object to object. A *brahmachâri* will likewise hear nothing obscene or unclean, smell no strong, stimulating, things. The smell of clean earth is far sweeter than the fragrance of artificial scents and essences. Let the aspirant to *brahmacharya* also keep his hands and feet engaged in all the waking hours in healthful activity. Let him also fast occasionally.
    3. **The third step is to have clean companions–clean friends and clean books.**
    4. The last and not the least is prayer. Let him repeat *Râmanâma* with all his heart regularly every day, and ask for divine grace. None of these things are difficult for an average man or woman. They are simplicity itself. But their very simplicity is embarrassing. Where there is a will, the way is simple enough. Men have not the will for it and hence vainly grope. The fact that the world rests on the observance, more or less, of *brahmacharya* or restraint, means that it is necessary and practicable. [The original Gujarati article appeared in *Navjivan*, 4-4-1926. This is a translation by Mahadev Desai.]
52. **THE LAW OF CONTINENCE** *(Young India*, 25 Aug 1927) **Let no one desirous of leading a pure and chaste life think that the practice of it is not worth pursuing because the expected result is not attained in a moment. And let no one expect perfection of body after successful practice of continence even for a long time. The majority of us, who endeavor to follow the rules laid down for observing continence, labor under three handicaps. We have inherited imperfect bodies and weak wills from our parents, and by an incorrect life we find ourselves to have further debilitated both our bodies and wills. When a writing advocating purity of life attracts us, we begin the reformation. Such reformation is never too late.** But we must not expect the results described in such writings; for, those results are to be expected only from a strictly regulated life from early youth. And the third handicap we labor under is, that in spite of the

exercise of all the artificial and outward restraint, we find ourselves unable to restrain and regularize our thoughts. And let every aspirant after a pure life take from me that an impure thought is often as powerful in undermining the body as an impure act. Control over thought is a long, painful and laborious process. But I am convinced that no time, no labor and no pain is too much for the glorious result to be reached. The purity of thought is possible only with a faith in God bordering on definite experience.

- ***"So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity***
- ***That when a soul is found sincerely so,***
- ***A thousand liveried angles lackey her"*** –Milton

53. By the use of the term continence is meant the voluntary and entire abstinence from sexual indulgence in any form and having complete control over the passions by one who knows their power, and who but for his pure life and steady will, not only could but would indulge them.
54. **The advantages of a strictly continent life are: The nervous system is invigorated and strengthened. The special senses–the sight, hearing, etc., are strong, delicate, and acute. The digestive system is kept normal and man knows not what a sick day is… The brain is enlarged and perfect, memory grows strong, and the perceptive and reflective faculties increase in power.** The soul in its exercise reaches up and commingles with the Spirit of God. The reproductive element is preserved in all its life-renewing and life-giving power until full ripeness of years.
55. The following are to be strictly avoided by those whose desire it is to lead a pure, chaste, and continent life:
    0. **Tobacco in all its forms. All manner of alcoholic liquors. Tea, coffee, and chocolate. Late suppers and over-eating. Sweetmeats, candies, etc. White bread when it is possible to get the graham. Pork and all fat and salt meats, sausages, pickles, etc. Salt except in moderate quantities, pepper, mustard, spices, vinegar, and other condiments. Mince and other pies and all manner of pastry.**
    1. **All constriction of dress about the body.**
    2. Feather beds and pillows and heavy bed covering. Unventilated and unlighted bedrooms. Remaining in bed in the morning after waking. Uncleanliness of the body, Turkish and Russian baths.
    3. **Idleness and inaction of body and mind. Companions of doubtful or bad natures. Irresolute will.**
    4. Drugs and patent medicines. Quack doctors.
56. The things below enumerated you are requested to observe, use and enjoy, if you would live a healthy life, a continent life, a happy and a long life: The cultivation of a firm and determined will. The active morning and evening exercise of the religious sentiments. In the right and faithful observance of these laws man will find all the requirements necessary to the growth of perfect health, purity of body, nobleness of soul, and, above and over all, continence.
57. A man who wants to control his animal passions easily does so if he controls his palate. I fear this is one of the most difficult vows to follow…. I may say this: unless we take our minds off from this habit (slavery to the palate), and unless we shut our eyes to the tea shops and coffee shops and all these kitchens, and unless we are satisfied with foods that are necessary for the proper maintenance of our physical health, and unless we are prepared to rid ourselves of stimulating, heating, and exciting condiments that we mix with our food, we will certainly not be able to control the over-abundant, unnecessary, and exciting stimulation that we may have. If we do not do that, the result naturally is, that we abuse ourselves and we abuse even the sacred trust given to us, and we become less than animals and brutes. Eating, drinking, and indulging in passions we share in common with the animals; but have you ever seen a horse or a cow

indulging in the abuse of the palate as we do? Do you suppose it is a sign of civilization, a sign of real life that we should multiply our eatables so far that we do not know where we are; and seek dishes until at last we have become absolutely mad and run after the newspaper sheets which give us advertisements about these dishes?

58. WALLS OF PROTECTION *(Harijan*, 15 June 1947) Let us ask ourselves what wall should be erected to protect Brahmacharya. The answer seems clear. It is not Brahmacharya that needs walls of protection. To say this is easy enough and sounds sweet. But it is difficult to understand the import of the statement and more so to act accordingly. **It is true that he who has attained perfect Brahmacharya, does not stand in need of protecting walls. But the aspirant undoubtedly needs them, even as a young mango plant has need of a strong fence round it. A child goes from its mother's lap to the cradle and from the cradle to the push-cart–till he becomes a man who has learnt to walk without aid. To cling to the aid when it is needless, is surely harmful.** Brahmacharya is one out of the eleven observances. It follows, therefore, that the real aid to Brahmacharya are the remaining ten observances. The difference between them and the walls of protection is that the latter are temporary, the former permanent. They are an integral part of Brahmacharya.
59. *A Perfect Brahmachari*. Self-indulgence and hypocrisy are sins to be avoided. The true Brahmachari will shun false restraints. He must create his own fences according to his limitations, breaking them down when he feels that they are unnecessary. The first thing is to know what true Brahmacharya is, then to realize its value and, lastly, to try to cultivate this priceless virtue. I hold that **true service of the country demands this observance.**
60. ASHRAM OBSERVANCES IN ACTION, Ch. 4 of 12: Brahmacharya or chastity, pp. 48-57. This observance does not give rise to ever so many problems and dilemmas as ahimsa does. Its meaning is generally well understood, but understanding it is one thing: practising it is quite another thing and calls forth all our powers. Many of us put forth a great effort but without making any progress. Some of us even lost ground previously won. None has reached perfection. But everyone realizes its supreme importance. My striving in this direction began before 1906 when I took the vow. There were many ups and downs. It was only after I had burnt my fingers at times that I realized the deeper meaning of brahmacharya. And then I found that expositions made in books cannot be understood without actual experience, and wear a fresh aspect in the light of it. Even in the case of simple machine like the spinning-wheel, it is one thing to read the directions for plying it, and it is another thing to put the directions into practice. **New light dawns upon us as soon as we commence our practice.** And what is true of simple tangible things like the wheel is still more true of spiritual states.
61. A brahmachari is one who controls his organs of sense in thought, word and deed. The meaning of this definition became somewhat clear after I had kept the observance for some time, but it is not quite clear even now, for I do not claim to be a perfect brahmachari, evil thoughts having been held in restraint but not eradicated. When they are eradicated, I will discover further implications of the definition.
62. Ordinary brahmacharya is not so difficult as it is supposed to be. We have made it difficult by understanding the term in a narrow sense. Many of us play with brahmacharya like fools who put their hands in the fire and still expect to escape being burnt. **Very few realize that a brahmachari has to control not one but all the organs of sense.** He is no brahmachari who thinks that mere control of animal passion is the be-all and end-all of brahmacharya. No wonder if he finds it very difficult. He who attempts to control only one organ and allows all the others free play must not expect to achieve success. He might as well deliberately descend into a well and expect to keep his body dry. Those who would achieve an easy conquest of animal passion must give up all unnecessary things which stimulate it. They must control their palate and cease

to read suggestive literature and to enjoy all luxuries. I have not the shadow of a doubt that they will find brahmacharya easy enough after such renunciation.

63. Some people think that it is not a breach of brahmacharya to cast a lascivious look at one's own or another's wife or to touch her in the same manner; but nothing could be farther from the truth. Such behaviour constitutes a direct breach of brahmacharya in the grosser sense of the term. Men and women who indulge in it deceive themselves and the world, and growing weaker day by day, make themselves easily susceptible to disease. If they stop short of a full satisfaction of desire, the credit for it is due to circumstances and not to themselves. They are bound to fall at the very first opportunity.
64. **In brahmacharya as conceived by the Ashram those who are married behave as if they were not married.** Married people do well to renounce gratification outside the marital bond ; theirs is a limited brahmacharya. But to look upon them as brahmacharis is to do violence to that glorious term.
65. Such is the complete Ashram definition of brahmacharya. However there are men as well as women in the Ashram who enjoy considerable freedom in meeting one another. The ideal is that one Ashramite should have the same freedom in meeting another as is enjoyed by a son in meeting his mother or by a brother in meeting his sister. That is to say, the restrictions that are generally imposed for the protection of brahmacharya are lifted in the Satyagraha Ashram, where we believe that brahmacharya which ever stands in need of such adventitious support is no brahmacharya at all. The restrictions may be necessary at first but must wither away in time. Their disappearance does not mean that a brahmachari goes about seeking the company of women, but it does mean that if there is an occasion for him to minister to a woman, he may not refuse such ministry under the impression that it is forbidden to him.
66. **Woman for a brahmachari is not the "doorkeeper of hell" but is an incarnation of our Mother who is in Heaven. He is no brahmachari at all whose mind is disturbed if he happens to see a woman or if he has to touch her in order to render service. A brahmachari's reaction to a living image and to a bronze statue is one and the same.** But a man who is perturbed at the very mention of woman and who is desirous of observing brahmacharya, must fly even from a figurine made of metal.
67. I now come to a point of vital importance which I have reserved for treatment towards the end of the discussion. We are told in the Bhagavadgita (II : 59) that ''**when a man starves his senses, the objects of those senses disappear from him, but not the yearning for them; the yearning too departs when he beholds the Supreme'**', that is to say, the Truth or Brahma (God). The whole truth of the matter has here been set forth by the experienced Krishna. Fasting and all other forms of discipline are ineffective without the grace of God. What is the vision of the Truth or God? It does not mean seeing something with the physical eye or witnessing a miracle. Seeing God means realization of the fact that God abides in one's heart. The yearning must persist until one has attained this realization, and will vanish upon realization. It is with this end in view that we keep observances, and engage ourselves in spiritual endeavour at the Ashram. Realization is the final fruit of constant effort. The human lover sacrifices his all for his beloved, but his sacrifice is fruitless inasmuch as it is offered for the sake of momentary pleasure. But the quest of Truth calls for even greater concentration than that of the human beloved. There is joy ineffable in store for the aspirant at the end of the quest. Still very few of us are as earnest as even the human lover. Such being the facts of the case, what is the use of complaining that the quest of truth is an uphill task? The human beloved may be at a distance of several thousand miles; God is there in the tabernacle of the human heart, nearer to us than the finger nails are to the fingers. But what is to be done with a man who wanders all over the wide world in search of treasure which as a matter of fact is buried under his very feet ?

68. The brahmacharya observed by a self-restraining person is not something to be despised. It certainly serves to weaken the force of the yearning for the ”fleshpots of Egypt.” One may keep fasts or adopt various other methods of mortifying the flesh, but the objects of sense must be compelled to disappear. The yearning will get itself in readiness to go as this process is on. Then the seeker will have the beatific vision, and that will be the signal for the yearning to make its final exit. The treasure supposed to be lost will be recovered. He who has not put all his strength into his effort has no right to complain that he has not ”seen” Brahma. Observing brahmacharya is one of the means to the end which is seeing Brahma. Without brahmacharya no one may expect to see Him, and without seeing Him one cannot observe brahmacharya to perfection. The verse therefore does not rule out self-discipline but only indicates its limitations.
69. KEY TO HEALTH, Ch. 10 of 10: brahmacharya. (1942). Brahmacharya literally means that mode of life which leads to the realization of God. That realization is impossible without practicing self-restraint. Self-restraint means restraint of all the senses. But ordinarily brahmacharya is understood to mean control of sexual organs. This becomes natural for the man who exercises self-restraint all round. It is only when observance of brahmacharya becomes natural to one that he or she derives the greatest benefit from it. Such a person should be free from anger and kindred passion. **The so called brahmachâris, that one generally comes across, behave as if their one occupation in life was the display of bad temper.**
70. One notices that these people disregard the ordinary rules of brahmacharya and merely aim at and expect to practise physical brahmacharya. They fail to achieve their object. Some of them become almost insane while others betray a sickly appearance. They are unable to prevent the discharge and if they succeed in restraining themselves from sexual intercourse, they think that they have attained all that was needed. Now mere abstention from sexual intercourse cannot be termed brahmacharya. So long as the desire for intercourse is there, one cannot be said to have attained brahmacharya. Only he who has burnt away sexual desire in its entirety may be said to have attained control over his sexual organs. There is something very striking about a full-fledged brahmachâri. His speech, his thought, and his action, all bespeak possession of vital force.
71. Such a brahmachâri does not flee from the company of women. He may not hanker after it nor may he avoid it even when it means rendering of necessary service. **For him the distinction between men and women almost disappears. No one should distort my words and use them as an argument in favor of licentiousness.** What I mean to say is that, a man whose sexual desire has been burnt up ceases to make a distinction between men and women. It must be so. His conception of beauty alters. **He will not look at the external form. He or she whose character is beautiful will be beautiful in his eyes.** Therefore, the sight of women called beautiful will not ruffle or excite him. Even his sexual organs will begin to look different. In other words, such a man has so controlled his sexual instinct that he never gets erections. He does not become impotent for lack of the necessary secretions of sexual glands. But these secretions in his case are sublimated into a vital force pervading his whole being. It is said that an impotent man is not free form sexual desire. But the cultivated impotency of the man, whose sexual desire has been burnt up and whose sexual secretions are being converted into vital force, is wholly different. It is to be desired by everybody. It is true that such a brahmachâri is rare to find.
72. **I took the vow of brahmacharya in 1906.** In other words, my efforts to become a perfect brahmachâri started 36 years ago. I cannot say I have attained the full brahmacharya of my definition, but in my opinion I have made substantial progress towards it. If God wills it, I might attain even perfection in this life. **Anyway, there is no relaxation of efforts nor is there any despondence in me. I do not consider 36 years too long a period for effort. The richer the**

prize, the richer the effort must be. Meanwhile, my ideas regarding the necessity for brahmacharya have become stronger. Some of my experiments have not reached a stage when they might be placed before the public with advantage. I hope to do so some day if they succeed to my satisfaction. Success might make the attainment of brahmacharya comparatively easier.

73. But the brahmacharya on which I wish to lay emphasis in this chapter is limited to the conservation of sexual secretions. The glorious fruit of perfect brahmacharya is not to be had from the observance of this limited brahmacharya. But no one can reach perfect brahmacharya without reaching the limited variety.
74. And maintenance of perfect health should be considered almost an utter impossibility without the brahmacharya leading to the conservation of the sexual secretions. To countenance wastage of a secretion which has the power of creating another human being is, to say the least, an indication of gross ignorance. A firm grasp of the fact that sex is meant to be used only for procreation and not for self-indulgence, leaves no room whatsoever for indulging in animal passion. Assimilation of the knowledge that the vital fluid is never meant for waste should restrain men and women from becoming crazy over sexual intercourse. Marriage will then come to have a different significance and the way it is treated at present will appear disgusting. **Marriage ought to signify a union of heart between two partners. A married couple is worthy of being considered brahmachâris if they never think of sexual intercourse except for the purposes of procreation. Such an intercourse is not possible unless both parties desire it. It will never be resorted to in order to satisfy passion without the desire for a child. After intercourse which has been performed as a matter of duty, the desire to repeat the process should never arise.**
75. What I am saying may not be taken as copy book wisdom. The reader should know that I am writing this after a long personal experience. **I know that what I am writing is contrary to the common practice. But in order to make progress we have often to go beyond the limits of common experience. Great discoveries have been possible only as a result of challenging the common experience or commonly held beliefs. The invention of the simple match stick was a challenge to the common experience, and the discovery of electricity confounded all preconceived notions.**
76. **What is true of physical things is equally true of things spiritual. In the early days there was no such thing as marriage. Men and women, as in the case of animals, mated promiscuously. Self-restraint was unknown. Some advanced men went beyond the rut of common practice and discovered the Law of Self-Restraint.** It is our duty to investigate the hidden possibilities of the Law of Self-Restraint. Therefore, when I say it is the duty of every man and woman to take the marital relations to the state indicated by me it is not to be dismissed as utterly impracticable. If human life is molded as it ought to be, conservation of vital fluid can become a natural thing for everyone.
77. The sexual glands are all the time secreting the reproductive elements. This secretion should be utilized for enhancing one's mental, physical, and spiritual energy. He who would learn to utilize it thus, will find that he requires very little food to keep his body in a fit condition. And yet he will be as capable as any of undertaking physical labour. Mental exertion will not tire him easily nor will he show the ordinary signs of old age. Just as a ripe fruit or an old leaf falls off naturally, so will such a brahmachâri, when his time comes, pass away with all his faculties intact. **Although with the passage of time the effects of the natural wear and tear must be manifest in his body, his intellect instead of showing signs of decay should show progressive clarity.** If all this is correct, the real key to health lies in the conservance of vital energy.
78. I give here the rules for the conservation of vital force as I know them.

0. Sexual desire has its root in one's thought. Therefore, complete control over thought is necessary. The way to achieve it is this. Never let your mind remain idle. Keep it filled with good and useful ideas. In other words keep thinking of whatever duty you have on hand. There need be no worry about it, but think out how can you become an expert in your department and then put your thoughts into action. There should be no waste of thoughts. Japa (repetition of God's name) is a great support when idle thoughts haunt you. Contemplate God in the form you have pictured Him unless you know Him as formless. While japa is going on, no other thoughts should be allowed to enter one's mind. This is the ideal state. But if one cannot reach it and all sorts of uninvited thoughts invade one's mind, one should not become disheartened. Nâmajapa should be continued faithfully and in the confidence that ultimate victory is bound to follow.
1. As with our thoughts, so with our reading and talking. These should be healthy and clean. Erotic literature should be avoided. Idle, indecent talk leads to indecent action. It is obvious that one who does not wish to feed his animal passions will avoid occupations which tend to include them.
2. Like the mind, the body must also be kept well and usefully occupied, so that the fatigue of the day may lead to refreshing dreamless sleep. As far as possible, work should be in open. Those who for some reason or the other, cannot undertake physical labour, should make it a point to take regular exercise. **In my opinion, a brisk walk in the open is the best form of exercise. During the walk the mouth should be closed and breathing should be done through the nose. Sitting or walking, the body must be held erect. To sit or stand otherwise is a size of laziness and laziness is the enemy of self-restraint.** Yogic exercises–asanas–are also useful. This much I can say from my personal experience that one who keeps his hands and feet, eyes and ears, healthily occupied does not have much difficulty in controlling the animal appetite. Everyone can test this for himself.
3. A Sanskrit text says that a man becomes what he eats. A glutton who exercises no restraint in eating is a slave to his animal passions. One who has not been able to control his palate, will never be able to control the other senses. If this is true, it is clear that one should take just enough food for the requirements of the body and no more. The diet should be healthy and well-balanced. The body was never meant to be treated as a refuse bin holding the foods that the palate demands. Food is meant to sustain the body. His body has been given to man as a means of self-realization. Self-realization means realization of God. A person who has made this realization the object of his or her life, will never become a slave to the animal passion.
4. **Man should look upon every woman as his mother, sister, or daughter. No one ever entertains impure thoughts with regard to his mother, sister, or daughter. Similarly, women should look upon every man as her father, brother, or son.**

79. I have given more hints than these in my other writings, but they are all contained in the five given above. Anyone who observes them should find it easy to overcome what has been called the greatest of all passions. A person, who has real desire for brahmacharya, will not give up the effort because he or she regards the observance of these rules as impossible or at least within the reaches of one in a million. The effort is a joy in itself. To put it in another way, the joy of possessing perfect health is not to be compared with any other, and perfect health is unattainable by slaves. Slavery of one's animality is perhaps the worst of all.
80. A few words about contraceptives will not be out of place here. The practice of preventing progeny, by means of artificial methods, is not a new thing. In the past such methods were practiced secretly and they were crude. Modern society have given them respectable place and

made improvements. They have been given a philanthropic garb. The advocates of contraceptives say that sexual desire is a natural instinct–some call it a blessing. They therefore say that we should not suppress the desire even if it were possible. Birth control by means of self-restraint is, in their opinion, difficult to practice. If a substitute for self-restraint is not prescribed, the health of innumerable is bound to suffer through frequent pregnancies. They add that if births are not regulated, over population will ensue; individual families will be pauperized and their children will be ill fed, ill clothed, and ill educated. Therefore, they argue, it is the duty of scientists to devise harmless and effective methods of birth control. This argument has failed to convince me. The use of contraceptives is likely to produce evils of which we have no conception. But the worse danger is that the use of contraceptives bids fair to kill the desire for self-restraint. In my opinion it is too heavy a price to pay for any possible immediate gain. But this is not the place to argue my point. Those who would like to pursue this subject further should procure the booklet called Self-Restraint v. Self-Indulgence, read and digest what I have said therein and then do as their heads and heart may dictate. Those who have not the desire or the leisure to read the booklet will, if they follow my advice, avoid contraceptive as poison. They should try their best to exercise self-restraint. They should take up such activities as would keep their bodies and minds fully occupied and give a suitable outlet to their energy. It is necessary to have some healthy recreation when one is tired by physical labour. There should not be a single moment of idleness for the devil to creep in. In this way, true conjugal love will be established and directed into healthy channels. Both the partners will make a progressive rise in their moral height. The joy of true renunciation, once they come to know it, will prevent them from turning to animal enjoyment. Self-deception is the greatest stumbling block. Instead of controlling the mind, the fountain of all animal desire, men and women involve themselves in the vain endeavor to avoid the physical act. If there is a determination to control the thought and the action, victory is sure to follow. Man must understand that woman is his companion and helpmate in life and not the means of satisfaction of his carnal desire. There must be a clear perception that the purpose of human creation was wholly different from that of the satisfaction of the animal wants. Brahmacharya will come easy to anyone who controls his palate.

IV. Your Comments

Please give your comments below. I sincerely look forward to them for further improving the content and organization of this extremely important post.

Thanks,
Gopal